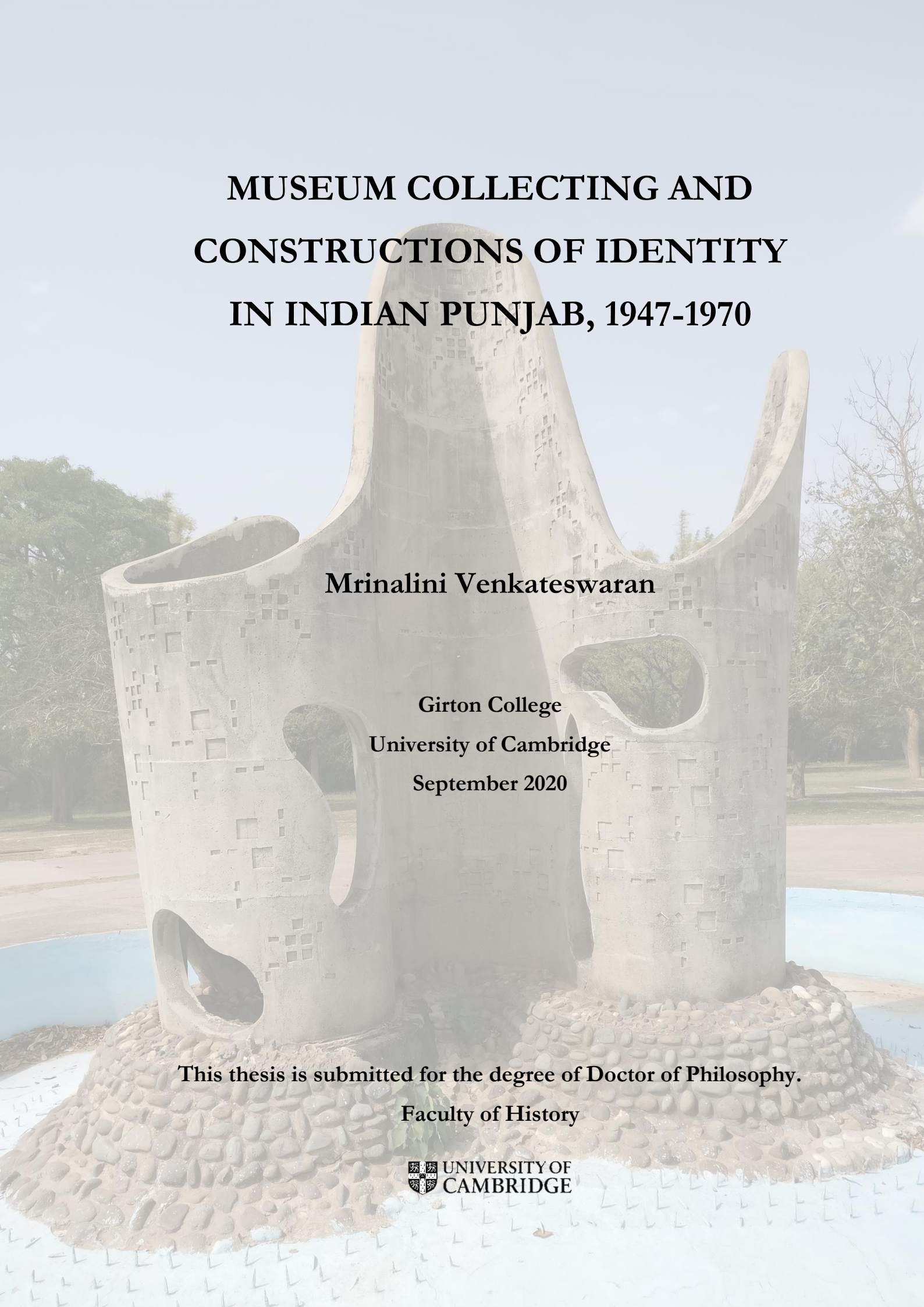

MUSEUM COLLECTING AND CONSTRUCTIONS OF IDENTITY IN INDIAN PUNJAB, 1947-1970

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This thesis is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Faculty of History

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This thesis is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. It is not substantially the same as any that I have submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for a degree or diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. I further state that no substantial part of my thesis has already been submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. It does not exceed the prescribed word limit for the relevant Degree Committee.

ABSTRACT

Museum Collecting and Constructions of Identity in Indian Punjab, 1947-1970

Mrinalini Venkateswaran

This thesis takes an original approach to twentieth century south Asian history by linking long established research on partition and postcolonial nation building, with a new domain of enquiry and material: museum historiography and practice. If unpacking colonial museums and collecting practices revealed the workings of colonialism and the colonial state, what can studying postcolonial museums and collecting practices tell us about the nation-state? What sort of national discourse did they generate in these early years, especially when located away from the centre in a region like Indian Punjab?

Collecting for a Punjab museum continued throughout the region's unique experience of changing boundaries and polities from 1947-1966, beginning with partition, and ending with the linguistic reorganisation of states, with a phase of princely federation in between. These events and their implications impacted the ways in which the collections were acquired, and subsequently interpreted. Competing, conflicting narratives and motivations emerge, including nostalgia for a pre-partition past, and princely legacies offering alternative national imaginaries, set against an Indian art historical project that projected art from the Kangra Valley as the pinnacle of not only Punjab's but India's artistic heritage. How did the Punjab Museum — which later became the Chandigarh Museum — present Punjab to itself, to India, and the world?

I approach these questions by using personal correspondence and archival material to reveal the previously unconsidered transnational networks that animate this history, which challenge our assumptions about the people and processes that shape a nation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have had the best years of my life while working on this thesis, and for that I have many people and institutions to thank.

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Getting to the University of Cambridge was by no means certain. I will remain indebted to the Cambridge Trust and the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation, for the co-funded RGCS award that made it possible for me to do this PhD — and to the Faculty of History for nominating me for consideration! The Faculty continued to be a source of funding and support for fieldwork, attending conferences, and acquiring training, without which I would have struggled to access the many original archival sources, and have the stimulating intellectual exchanges, that have shaped this thesis.

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Archivists and curators are the engines that drive any such endeavour, as I know only too well from having sat on the other side of the table! In addition to the official permissions I was granted and that I am grateful for, I owe this thesis to the rich resources, and assistance from the staff of: the Ancient India and Iran Trust (Joanna Salisbury), Archaeological Library Karachi (Amanat Ali Khan, Shabbir Abu Bakr), British Academy Archive (Karen Syrett), the British Library Asia and Africa Reading Room, Government Museum and Art Gallery and Library, Chandigarh (Sangeeta Sharma, Seema Gera), Lahore Fort Library (Azhar Iqbal), National Archives of India (Jaya Ravindran, Priyanka), National Archives of Pakistan (Zahir Gul), National Art Library, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, Panjab Digital Library (Davinder Pal Singh), Punjab State Archives, and Museums (Parminder Kaur Sandhu, Mohiuddin Farooqui, Monis Khan, Malvinder Kaur, Jagroop Singh), Punjab Archives Lahore (Abbas Chughtai), Royal Academy Archive (Mark Pomeroy), Thomas J. Watson Library at the Met, Tribune Archive (Karun Saini, Mr Rajan, Roopinder Singh, Mrs Jyotsna), the UCL Special Collections at the National Archives London (Mandy Wise), and the V&A Archives.

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CONTENTS

Cover: 'Undivided Punjab' made by S. L. Parasher in 1967, stands opposite the Chandigarh Museum. It is a response to the reorganisation of the state in 1966. Its textured surface is imprinted with the words of Punjabi poetry and folk songs.[1]

[1] Image: Author.

List of Illustrations

Figs 2.8 & 2.9: President Muhammad Ayub Khan inaugurating the special exhibition of the Sikh treasures.
Fig 2.10: Watercolour of Maharaja Dalip Singh reproduced in the catalogue (after Winterhalter).

Chapter III

Fig 3.1: Anarkali's Tomb, Lahore, formerly the Central Record Office, now the Punjab Archives.
Figs 3.2 & 3.3: Maharaj Kumar Bhawani Singh of Jaipur; with President Rajendra Prasad the focus of attention.
Fig 3.4: Maharaj Kumar Bhawani Singh of Jaipur accompanies President Rajendra Prasad at an event at Rashtrapati Bhavan.
Fig 3.5 & 3.6: A sketch; and a recent photograph of 'The Manse'.
Figs 3.7 & 3.8: Kangra fort and the sheer drop to the river below it; much of it remains in ruins.
Fig 3.9: View of the Kangra Valley from the fort.
Fig 3.10 & 3.11: The many-pillared hall at Sansar Chand's alternate capital of Tira Sujanpur; and the view from its ruined interior.
Figs 3.12 & 3.13: Shalimar Bagh, Srinagar, Kashmir; and Lahore, West Punjab.

Chapter IV

Fig 4.1: Pre-partition map of the Punjab.
Fig 4.2 & 4.3: Maharaja Yadavindra Singh of Patiala (b. 1913; r. 1938-1974); Maharaja Jagatjit Singh of Kapurthala (b. 1872; r. 1877-1949).
Figs 4.4 & 4.5: View of the Qila Mubarak; the interior of the Durbar Hall as it is today.
Figs 4.6 & 4.7: Maharaja Paramjit Singh of Kapurthala (r. 1949-1955); the Jagatjit Palace, modelled on Versailles, now the Sainik School.
Fig 4.8: Maharaja Yadavindra Singh of Patiala as Ambassador to the Netherlands, 1971.
Fig 4.9: Schematic illustration of the division and redivision of East Punjab.
Fig 4.10: Façade of the Old Moti Bagh Palace, now the National Institute of Sports.
Fig 4.11: The Sheesh Mahal at the rear of the Old Moti Bagh Palace grounds, approached from the latter via a suspension bridge over a tank.
Figs 4.12 & 4.13: The walls of the upper floor were lined with case after case of the superb Patiala medal collection, acquired by Maharaja Bhupinder Singh, mainly from Spink & Co., London.
Fig 4.14: Maharaja Ranjit Singh.
Fig 4.15: This life-size statue of Maharaja Ranjit Singh was unveiled at Lahore Fort on 27 June 2019 on his 180th birthday, to a mixed reception.

Chapter V

Fig 5.1: The Punjab Museum, later the Chandigarh Museum (officially the Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh).
Figs 5.2 & 5.3: M. S. Randhawa; W. G. and Mildred Archer early in their careers.
Figs 5.4 & 5.5: M. S. Randhawa with Sardar Vallabhai Patel and Dr Rajendra Prasad on the ramparts of the Red Fort on 15 August 1947; Randhawa receiving his D. Sc. in 1956 from Dewan Anand Kumar, Vice Chancellor of Punjab University.
Figs 5.6, 5.7 & 5.8: M. S. Randhawa and his wife Iqbal Kaur, Mulk Raj Anand and his colleague Dolly Sahiar, and W. G. Archer on a visit to Basohli, with Pahda Kunj Lal at the centre of the group; Randhawa with Norah Richards on the verandah of her cottage at Andretta; crowds welcome Randhawa and Archer at Saliana village in the Kangra Valley in 1966.
Figs 5.9 & 5.10: Archer and Randhawa with Raja Baldev Singh of Guler at Haripur, 1954; with Maharaja Manabendra Shah of Tehri Garhwal at Narendranagar.
Figs 5.11, 5.12 & 5.13: Plaques at the entrance of the Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh; and a view of the entrance with the great pivoting door open.
Figs 5.14 & 5.15: Signs in the Museum directing visitors to the two regional galleries; entrance to the gallery displaying (mainly) the Museum's Pahari paintings.
Fig 5.16: Tabulation of the Museum's holdings on the eve of its opening.
Fig 5.17: Norah Richards' cottage at Andretta as of 2018.
Figs 5.18 & 5.19: The Himachal State Museum; its renovated Pahari painting gallery.
Figs 5.20 & 5.21: The Museum of Kangra Art at Dharamshala; its painting gallery.

Chapter VI

Fig 6.1: Mir Bannu or Balwant Singh watching a firework display, Nainsukh, c. 1751, Punjab Hills, purchased in 1912 from A. K. Coomaraswamy.
Figs 6.2 & 6.3: Evolving covers of *Indian Art and Letters* from Vol 1; to Vol 29.
Figs 6.4, 6.5, 6.6: *Roopa Lekha* in the 1930s; after Randhawa became Chief Editor in 1958; and 1968.
Figs 6.7, 6.8, 6.9: Inside the Lok Virsa Museum Islamabad, with displays on Turkey; Kazakhstan; and Azerbaijan, connecting them with the crafts and tribal culture of Pakistan.
Figs 6.10 & 6.11: Evolving covers of *Marg* from Vol 1 No. 4; to Vol 27 No. 2.
Figs 6.12 & 6.13: Cover with a Basohli painting; and W. G. Archer commemoration volume.
Figs 6.14 & 6.15: Portrait of Dr M. S. Randhawa published in the felicitation volume on his sixtieth birthday; a meeting of the editorial board pictured in the same volume.
Fig 6.16: M. S. Randhawa, W. G. Archer, and Mulk Raj Anand on travels together in the Kangra Valley in search of paintings in 1954.

Figs 6.17a-f: Assorted covers of *Marg*, dedicated to the arts or culture of Punjab.
Figs 6.18 & 6.19: 25th anniversary edition cover; the cover of the Himachal Heritage volume.
Fig 6.20: The entrance to the War Memorial at Ferozepur.
Fig 6.21: The memorial contains 'history paintings' with portraits of the key players involved in the four Anglo-Sikh wars of Mudki, Ferozeshah, Sabraon, and Chillianwalla, as well as 'depicting' the key events.
Figs 6.22 & 6.23: Cover of *Roopa Lekha* issue featuring Sobha Singh's work; screenshot from the Sobha Singh website run by his family, featuring his work.
Fig 6.24: Radha and Krishna, Basohli, made c. 1730-1735, attributed to Manaku, brother of Nainsukh.
Fig 6.25: Possibly Radha as Abhisandita nayika (the estranged mistress), made c. 1870 at Kangra in the Guler style; unknown artist. Part of the P. C. Manuk and G. M. Coles bequest.
Fig 6.26: Views of the new Indian galleries at the Victoria & Albert Museum, as published in *Indian Art and Letters*.

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INTRODUCTION

Art and culture are sources of strength and resilience in times of crisis, a point evident at the time of writing, during the Covid-19 pandemic of 2020.[1] Major museums stayed 'open' online through lockdowns,[2] running campaigns (in some cases, begun by their visitors) to help people beat quarantine blues.[3] Many have collected objects to remember this global event. But will future historians of the pandemic recall the role of museums, or count them a source from which to write its history?

This thesis, by contrast, views museums as an essential source for writing history, and not 'mere repositories' for its remains. Dealing with another period of crisis — the aftermath of partition — it reconfigures our understanding of modern South Asian history through the power of the object. Going beyond familiar postcolonial critiques of the museum's colonial template, it interrogates the relationship between collections and the Indian nation-state.

It also offers a novel interpretation of regional politics, and the region's imagination of its place within the nation, linking both to art collections and regional museums.

Most ambitious of all, this study breaks down the museum — and the histories it enables us to recover — into the networks of people that shaped it.

Seen today as dull, 'dead' and often dusty spaces that inspire few, and draw in even fewer, rare is the adult Indian who visits a government museum by choice. Instead, they are 'required' to go, as school children. Historians of museums, and museum

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[1] 'Even During COVID-19, Art "Brings us Closer Together than Ever" – UN Cultural Agency', UN Website [https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/04/1061802, accessed 20 June 2020].
[2] '5 Famous Museums You Can Visit During COVID-19 Lockdown via a Virtual Tour', *The Indian Express,* 22 May 2020 [https://indianexpress.com/article/technology/tech-news-technology/virtual-tour-famous-museums-lockdown-6419210/, accessed 20 June 2020].
[3] 'Beating Quarantine Blues: People Recreate Famous Artworks with Objects at Home', *The Hindu*, 9 April 2020 [https://www.thehindu.com/entertainment/art/beating-quarantine-blues-people-are-recreating-famous-artworks-with-objects-at-home/article31299037.ece, accessed 20 July 2020].

professionals too (some in government service, many outside it), bemoan this state of affairs.

And yet: the Remember Bhopal Museum opened in 2014, thirty years after the Bhopal gas tragedy of 1984. It was envisaged as an act of resistance against the Madhya Pradesh government. This survivor-led effort conceived of the museum as 'a tool in their continuing struggle for a life with dignity and justice', rather than freezing and immobilising them as an event in 'history'. It is determined to 'prevent…official appropriation of the narrative'; and aspires to 'inspire' others, including existing museums, to curate contemporary stories and struggles.[4] The single-minded focus, and activist ethos of this museum suggest that something has changed: the museum has broken free of the 'taint' of the official and can be 'owned' by non-state actors as much as by the state.

The Virasat-e-Khalsa at Anandpur Sahib, designed by the Canadian-Israeli architect Moshe Safdie, is a museum of another kind of community; a religious one. Established by the Anandpur Sahib Foundation, with the support of the Government of Punjab at enormous cost (albeit not without criticism[5]), it opened in 2011. Its mandate is to tell a single history of Sikhism and 'the Sikhs',[6] shaping how 'the community' sees itself and wishes to be regarded by others. It attracts the highest number of visitors among all museums in the country.[7]

These two museums could not be more different: the first a poor, low-tech museum with a message of resistance, self-empowerment, and social change; the second an expensive, celebratory monument to a community. But from two ends of the

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[4] Remember Bhopal Museum Website [https://rememberbhopal.net/overview/, accessed 19 May 2020]. My example is hauntingly topical as there was a gas leak in Vishakhapatnam in March 2020. For sample coverage, see Sumit Bhattacharjee, 'Vizag Gas Leak: An Avoidable Tragedy', *The Hindu,* 17 May 2020 [https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/andhra-pradesh/avoidable-tragedy/article31609216.ece, accessed 19 May 2020].

[5] See William J. Glover, 'The Khalsa Heritage Complex' in *The Oxford Handbook of Sikh Studies* ed. by Pashaura Singh and Louis E. Fenech (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 441-448.

[6] Sikhism is not uniform. It is outside the scope of this thesis to critique which groups might be excluded or what version of Sikhism is projected. For a critique, see *Ibid.*

[7] As of 2019. '"Virasat-e-Khalsa", Museum with Highest Footfall in India', *The Economic Times*, 25 February 2019 [https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/virasat-e-khalsa-museum-with-highest-footfall-in-india/highest-footfall-in-the-country/slideshow/68149284.cms, accessed 19 May 2020].

spectrum, they demonstrate the continuing institutional capacity of the museum to confer legitimacy to particular versions of history. Some things, then, have not changed.

These days, the state is stirring too. The Government of India has proposed to infuse money into state-run institutions to promote tourism[8] (with the strings of a new state narrative attached, no doubt). The global tally of museums has grown by sixty percent in the last decade.[9] Museums, therefore, still matter to a wide range of actors.

So, if this is the case now, in what ways did museums matter at partition, and in the formative years thereafter? The answers are relevant to historians of modern South Asia, to art historians, and to scholars of museums, as there is no regional precedent for this enquiry. Daniel Sherman and Irit Rogoff have observed that 'museums have a history but…their enterprise entails an attempt to conceal it.'[10] Whereas critical assessments of museums are now common in Euro-American scholarly literature (following an explosion in the 1990s),[11] they are rare for postcolonial South Asia.

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[8] 'Budget 2020: Govt Proposes to set up Indian Institute of Heritage and Conservation', *The Economic Times,* 1 February 2020 [https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/budget-2020-govt-proposes-to-set-up-indian-institute-of-heritage-and-conservation/articleshow/73835739.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst, accessed 19 May 2020].

[9] 'Covid-19 Crisis Closes 90 Percent of Museums Globally, UNESCO Plans for Reopenings', UN Website [https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/05/1064362, accessed 20 June 2020].

[10] Daniel J. Sherman and Irit Rogoff (eds.), *Museum Culture: Histories, Discourses, Spectacles* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. x.

[11] Some key works include: Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine (eds.), *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display* (Washington, D. C.; London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991); Ivan Karp, Christine M. Kreamer, Steven D. Lavine (eds.), *Museums and Communities: The Politics of Public Culture* (Washington, D. C.; London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992); Susan M. Pearce, *Museums, Objects and Collections: A Cultural Study* (Leicester; London: Leicester University Press, 1992); Timothy W. Luke, *Museum Politics: Power Plays at the Exhibition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002); Ivan Karp, Corinne A. Kratz, Lynn Szwaja, Tomas Ybarra-Frausto (eds.), *Museum Frictions: Public Cultures/Global Transformations* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006). None of these have South Asian examples. For an overview, see Randolph Starn, 'A Historian's Brief Guide to New Museum Studies', *The American Historical Review,* 110:1 (2005), pp. 68-98.

This thesis is a first step towards addressing this imbalance, by recovering the history of the Chandigarh Museum. This was originally conceived of as the Punjab Museum, intended to replace the Lahore Museum,[12] 'lost' to Pakistan at partition.

The history of the museum in the subcontinent has so far been almost exclusively situated within discussions of colonial India. It encompasses collecting practice in the British Raj, prevalent socio-political agendas and beliefs, the preoccupations and predilections of 'the colonising mind' that directed what was to be valued and how, and the knowledge-power nexus between museums and states.[13] There remains much scope for opening up the investigation of this history beyond these rather dated parameters — for instance by paying greater attention to museums in the princely states,[14] or broadening the discussion to historic indigenous collecting practices[15] — but this too is becoming known territory.

Tapati Guha-Thakurta[16] and Kavita Singh[17] have written of the moment of change when colonial 'antiquities' were transformed into 'national' art collections to facilitate the

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[12] One recent work examines the Lahore Museum, and while it proposes interesting revisions of the ways in which we read museums, its concerns diverge from mine. Shaila Bhatti, *Translating Museums: A Counterhistory of South Asian Museology* (London; New York: Routledge, 2012).

[13] See for instance Carol A. Breckenridge and Peter van der Veer (eds.), *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993); Bernard Cohn, *The Bernard Cohn Omnibus* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004); Tapati Guha-Thakurta, *Monuments, Objects, Histories: Institutions of Art in Colonial and Postcolonial India* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2007); Saloni Mathur, *India by Design: Colonial History and Cultural Display* (Berkeley; London: University of California, 2007); Saloni Mathur and Kavita Singh (eds.), *no touching, no spitting, no praying: The Museum in South Asia* (New Delhi: Routledge, 2015). Studies not exclusively dealing with India are also relevant such as Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

[14] Julie F. Codell, 'Ironies of Mimicry: The Art Collection of Sayajirao III, Maharaja of Baroda, and the Cultural Politics of Early Modern India', *Journal of the History of Collections,* 15:1 (2003), pp. 127-146; Giles Tillotson, 'The Jaipur Exhibition of 1883', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 14:2 (2004), pp. 111-126; Priya Maholay-Jaradi, *Fashioning a National Art: Baroda's Royal Collection and Art Institutions (1875-1924)* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2016).

[15] Savithri Preetha Nair, *Raja Serfoji II: Science, Medicine and Enlightenment in Tanjore* (London: Routledge, 2012); Rosie Llewellyn-Jones, *The Last King in India: Wajid 'Ali Shah, 1822-1887* (London: Hurst & Co., 2014). For indigenous and colonial collecting in conversation, see Maya Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire: Conquest and Collecting in the East 1750-1850* (London: Fourth Estate, 2005).

[16] Tapati Guha-Thakurta, *Monuments, Objects, Histories*.

[17] Kavita Singh, 'The Museum is National' in *India: A National Culture?* ed. by Geeti Sen (New Delhi: Sage Publications/ India International Centre, 2003), pp. 176-196.

'rituals' of nationhood. Kavita Singh has gone on to connect these nascent collections with the evolution of Indian art history,[18] and the continuities and change in 'colonial' and 'national' arrangements of collections for display. But the crucial years after partition, and the early years of independence — which were also the years of 'development' and the international museum movement — have not been investigated before.

Likewise, although historians of Indian or South Asian art have critiqued their discipline's colonial origins and gaze,[19] studied the historical context and compulsions of modern Indian or Pakistani art,[20] drawn attention to contemporary or popular art,[21] and folk art,[22] there is still little work that questions the uses that historic art was put to for constructing the postcolonial nation,[23] *and its regions*.

In this regard it is important to clarify that I use the terms colonial and postcolonial in a chronological sense throughout this thesis, and recognise that nuances of meaning vary with context; and that both meaning and context were by no means fixed at the time of my study.

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[18] Kavita Singh, 'Museums and the Making of the Indian Art Historical Canon' in *Towards a New Art History: Studies in Indian Art* ed. by Shivaji K. Panikkar, Parul D. Mukherji, Deeptha Achar (New Delhi: D. K. Printworld, 2003), pp. 335-357.

[19] Some examples are Partha Mitter, *Much Maligned Monsters: History of European Reactions to Indian Art* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977); Tapati Guha-Thakurta, 'Women as "Calendar Art" Icons: Emergence of Pictorial Stereotype in Colonial India', *Economic & Political Weekly,* 26:43 (1991), pp. 91-99; Giles Tillotson, *The Artificial Empire: The Indian Landscapes of William Hodges* (Richmond: Curzon, 2000); Parul Pandya Dhar (ed.), *Indian Art History: Changing Perspectives* (New Delhi: D. K. Printworld/ National Museum Institute, 2011).

[20] Partha Mitter, *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India, 1850-1922: Occidental Orientations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Iftikhar Dadi, *Modernism and the Art of Muslim South Asia* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010); Giles Tillotson, *Primitivism and Modern Indian Art* (New Delhi: Delhi Art Gallery, 2019).

[21] Examples include Patricia Uberoi, 'Feminine Identity and National Ethos in Indian Calendar Art', *Economic & Political Weekly,* 25:17 (1990), pp. 41-48; Richard Davis (ed.), *Picturing the Nation: Iconographies of Modern India* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 2007); Jyotindra Jain (ed.), *India's Popular Culture: Iconic Spaces and Fluid Images* (Mumbai: Marg Publications, 2007); Vasudha Dalmia and Rashmi Sadana (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Indian Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

[22] To cite just one example, Jyotindra Jain, *Other Masters: Five Contemporary Folk and Tribal Artists of India* (New Delhi: Crafts Museum/ Handicrafts and Handlooms Exports Corporation of India, 1998).

[23] Devika Singh, 'Indian Nationalist Art History and the Writing and Exhibiting of Mughal Art, 1910-48', *Art History,* 36:5 (2013), pp. 1042-1069; Devika Singh, 'Approaching the Mughal Past in Indian Art Criticism: The Case of MARG (1946-1963)', *Modern Asian Studies*, 47:1 (2013), pp. 167-203.

Kristina K. Phillips has made the only in-depth study of the National Museum, analysing its place in the nation, and its role in shaping it.[24] I move the discussion on by shifting the focus to the region. Punjab is its own particular case, with the Muslim demand for Pakistan contested by the idea of a Sikh homeland, supported (surreptitiously) by some Sikh princes who were complicit in the violence suffered by Muslims during the province's partition in 1947.[25] Although the princes were 'losers' in the struggle to retain autonomy and sovereignty thereafter, partition and independence nevertheless yielded 'soft power' cultural dividends for them. I show how the Maharaja of Patiala in particular was able to use his cultural assets to recentre the heart of the Sikh imaginary within his lands and person.

[24] Kristina K. Phillips, 'A Museum for the Nation: Publics and Politics at the National Museum of India', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Minnesota (2006); Kristy Phillips, 'Grace McCann Morley and the Display of Indian Modernity' in *no touching, no spitting, no praying* ed. by Saloni Mathur and Kavita Singh. Two books on collectors whose collections were acquired for the nation are Giles Tillotson, *A Passionate Eye: Textiles, Paintings, and Sculptures from the Bharany Collections* (Mumbai: Marg Foundation, 2014); Pratapaditya Pal, *In Pursuit of the Past: Collecting Old Art in Modern India, Circa 1875-1950* (Mumbai: Marg Foundation, 2015).

[25] Ian Copland, 'The Master and the Maharajas: The Sikh Princes and the East Punjab Massacres of 1947', *Modern Asian Studies,* 36:3 (2002), pp. 657-704. For a re-appraisal of this and other explanations for partition violence, see Gurharpal Singh, 'Sikhs and Partition Violence: A Re-evaluation' in *The Independence of India and Pakistan: New Approaches and Reflections* ed. by Ian Talbot (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 120-136.

The vast field of scholarship that has developed on partition since 1947 has ranged from high politics and official narratives,[26] to the granular detail of people,[27] places,[28] and individual experiences,[29] with increasing emphasis on the marginalised in society.[30] But even as the scale of the enquiry oscillates, it remains important for historians to converse with other disciplines; to keep neighbouring vistas in view, to benefit from their fresh perspectives. By linking partition historiography with the history of museum collecting in Indian Punjab, and Indian art history, this thesis adds to the existing scholarship in all three areas.

But it contributes most to our understanding of how the past is constructed and used, how networks of actors shape these processes, and what motivates them. It illuminates the mechanics of how individual quests (by administrators, and keepers of

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[26] Anil Seal, *The Emergence of Indian Nationalism: Competition and Collaboration in the Later Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971); Gordon Johnson, *Provincial Politics and Indian Nationalism — Bombay and the Indian National Congress, 1880 to 1915* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1973); Ayesha Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Ayesha Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule: The Origins of Pakistan's Political Economy of Defence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Asim Roy, 'The High Politics of India's Partition: The Revisionist Perspective', *Modern Asian Studies,* 24:2 (1990), pp. 385-408; Yasmin Khan, *The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2007); Joya Chatterji, 'Partition Studies: Prospects and Pitfalls' *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 73:2 (2014), pp. 309-312.

[27] Vazira Zamindar, *The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia: Refugees, Boundaries, Histories* (New York; Chichester: Columbia University Press, 2010); Haimanti Roy, *Partitioned Lives: Migrants, Refugees, Citizens in India and Pakistan, 1947-65* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2013); Taylor Sherman, William Gould, Sarah Ansari (eds.), *From Subjects to Citizens: Society and the Everyday State in India and Pakistan, 1947-1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Uditi Sen, *Citizen Refugee: Forging the Indian Nation After Partition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Sarah Ansari and William Gould, *Boundaries of Belonging: Localities, Citizenship and Rights in India and Pakistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

[28] Joya Chatterji, *The Spoils of Partition: Bengal and India, 1947-1967* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Uttara Shahani, 'Sind and the Partition of India, c. 1927-1952', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cambridge (2019).

[29] Gyanendra Pandey, *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism, and History in India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Sarah Ansari, *Life after Partition: Migration, Community and Strife in Sindh, 1947-1962* (Karachi; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); 1947partitionarchive.org.

[30] Urvashi Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition* (New Delhi: Viking, 1998); Urvashi Butalia (ed.), *Partition: The Long Shadow* (New Delhi: Zubaan, 2014); Anjali Bhardwaj Datta, 'Rebuilding Lives and Redefining Spaces: Women in Post-colonial Delhi, 1945-1980', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cambridge (2015); Anjali Bhardwaj Datta, "Useful' and 'Earning' Citizens? Gender, State, and the Market in Post-colonial Delhi', *Modern Asian Studies,* 53:6 (2019), pp. 1924-1955.

collections) to reconnect with their 'roots' sundered by partition became nation-building projects.

In their recent explorations of the history of archaeology in the subcontinent, Sudeshna Guha[31] and Nayanjot Lahiri[32] have noted that collections were partitioned because archaeological material was essential to India and Pakistan's sense of self. It was a tangible past to hold on to and to proclaim. I bring this to bear on work by Joya Chatterji and others on 'mutuality and cooperation' having characterised the early years of the Indo-Pakistani relationship, and give the argument greater sophistication and depth. Not only was the process of negotiating the division of historic and archaeological objects a part of the larger process of 'finalising' partition, it was one of the early successes. The thesis refocuses attention on museum objects as a crucible for forging nascent Indian and Pakistani identity.[33]

Historians of partition, notably Chatterji and Pallavi Raghavan, have 'credited' cross-border networks of politicians and bureaucrats in the main, with enabling partition.[34] This thesis recovers the role of a much more complex and far-flung network, hitherto marginal to the writing of South Asian history. I draw archaeologists such as Mortimer Wheeler and N. P. Chakravarti; museologists and archivists such as Grace Morley, G. L Chopra, and V. K. Suri; and art historians such as M. S. Randhawa and W. G. Archer into the spotlight, to show how they too, helped achieve partition, and the business of nation-building.

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[31] Sudeshna Guha, *Artefacts of History: Archaeology, Historiography and Indian Pasts* (New Delhi: Sage Publications India, 2015).

[32] Nayanjot Lahiri, *Marshalling the Past: Ancient India and its Modern Histories* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2012).

[33] The demolition of the Babri Masjid at Ayodhya looms large in scholarly work on heritage (especially archaeology), politics, and identity. For example, see Tapati Guha-Thakurta, 'Archaeology as Evidence: Looking Back from the Ayodhya Debate' (Calcutta: Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, 1997); Brian Hole, 'A Many-Cornered Thing: The Role of Heritage in Indian Nation-Building', *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding,* 7:2 (2013), pp. 196-222. But this thesis will demonstrate the breadth and depth of resonance that historic objects had, well before this event.

[34] Joya Chatterji, *The Spoils of Partition;* Pallavi Raghavan, 'The Finality of Partition: Bilateral Relations Between India and Pakistan, 1947-1957', PhD thesis, University of Cambridge (2012), recently published as Pallavi Raghavan, *Animosity at Bay: An Alternative History of the India- Pakistan Relationship, 1947-1952* (London: Hurst & Co., 2020).

The adaptability of these networks to partition, and their resilience thereafter, are key features that emerge, contributing to existing scholarship on network theory.[35] Through the museums they were involved in, this transnational and cosmopolitan network of actors played a role in constructing national narratives, both creating and challenging ideas of the nation as a 'container'.[36] It also carries forward the discussion on individual agency from the colonial[37] to the postcolonial,[38] within the niche arena of museums and cultural heritage.

One remarkable aspect of these outcomes is their highly contingent nature. It is a seemingly minor, but important point that challenges the teleology inherent in the popular understanding of historical action and its consequences. For, neither the specific narrative I reconstruct, nor the regional, or national identities I deconstruct were inevitable. Instead, they were born of the backgrounds, prejudices, idiosyncrasies, and interests of a small, well-connected network of people. Changing the people would have transformed the outcomes.

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[35] Sanjeev Khagram and Peggy Levitt (eds.), *The Transnational Studies Reader: Intersections and Innovations* (New York: Routledge, 2008), Introduction.

[36] Sanjeev Khagram and Peggy Levitt (eds.), *The Transnational Studies Reader*, p. 5. To go 'beyond nationalism' is also the goal in Brian J. Graham and Peter Howard (eds.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Heritage and Identity* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008).

[37] Classic examples of the two sides of the colonial hegemony vs native agency debate are Nicholas B. Dirks, *The Hollow Crown: Ethnohistory of an Indian Kingdom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); C. A. Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780-1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

[38] The existing work, though valuable to this thesis, leaves room for expansion. Joseph M. Hodge, *Triumph of the Expert: Agrarian Doctrines of Development and the Legacies of British Colonialism* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2007); Mark Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and Ideological Origins of the United Nations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009); Markus Daechsel, *Islamabad and the Politics of International Development in Pakistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 3; Robert S. Anderson, *Nucleus and Nation: Scientists, International Networks and Power in India* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016); Lynn Meskell, *A Future in Ruins: UNESCO, World Heritage, and the Dream of Peace* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).

The politics of representation is of critical importance when deconstructing the museum — who and what is and is not represented, how the story is told, and who decides what is said,[39] and what sort of objects acquire 'heritage' value.[40] This is linked to a museum understanding what its role in society is.[41] M. S. Randhawa and W. G. Archer were former Indian Civil Service[42] officers who struck up an unlikely friendship because of a shared passion for 'Pahari' paintings from the Western Himalayas, often called the Punjab Hills. At the Chandigarh Museum, Pahari paintings have pride of place, notwithstanding the collection's other riches. Randhawa and Archer were instrumental in securing an exalted place for this art both in India and internationally. This thesis unpacks how they achieved this through their collecting activities and writing (their position as elites within a network was an important facilitator). It examines the resulting implications for how Punjab is imagined within India, and seen by the world. It also factors in their shared cosmopolitan and transnational networks, and biases, to uncover what motivated them in their quest.

Sources and Methodology

Methodologically, this is a historical thesis, which is reflected by the preponderance of paper-based primary sources. But it draws on my experience as a museum professional to make a new discipline relevant to the writing of history. The thesis is conceptualised around the correspondence between M. S. Randhawa and W. G. Archer over twenty-five years, from 1954-1979.[43] Taken together, their archives are a unique, and almost wholly

[39] Timothy W. Luke, *Museum Politics*; Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine (eds.), *Exhibiting Cultures*.
[40] Bella Dicks, 'Heritage as a Social Practice' in *Heritage at the Interface: Interpretation and Identity* ed. by Glenn Hooper (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2018), pp. 11-24.
[41] Sheila Watson (ed.), *Museums and their Communities* (London; New York: Routledge, 2007).
[42] The Indian Administrative Service after independence, although Randhawa retained the designation 'I. C. S.' on official correspondence.
[43] The Archer papers (Mss Eur F/236) at the British Library include those of both W. G. and Mildred Archer from 1929-1986. The handlist notes the date of deposit as 4 May 1965; papers with a later date must have been deposited subsequently, perhaps in part by W. G., or in their entirety by Mildred after his death in 1979. Randhawa's set is deposited at the Library of the Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh.

untapped[44] resource for research on South Asian museums, art history,[45] and history. Because art historians of India or South Asia were a small, close-knit community in the twentieth century, almost everyone of note corresponded with Randhawa and Archer,[46] who were meticulous about filing and depositing their papers with local institutions for public access. Under the circumstances, it is astonishing that their archives have not seen wider use or greater focus.

M. S. Randhawa is a controversial figure among historians of partition. His autobiography *Aap Beeti*[47] (first published in 1985) remains in print, but until now, it has not been used for scholarly work in English. One reason is that it was written in Punjabi, which many historians of partition do not read (myself included); but it is an unusual omission. *Aap Beeti* has been translated for this thesis.[48]

Other archival sources include the papers of Mortimer Wheeler, institutional archives, and government records and correspondence held in London, New Delhi, Patiala, Shimla, and Chandigarh. Of these, the internal records of the museums and archives department[49] of East, or Indian Punjab, in the aftermath of partition, are fresh sources. They have produced breath-taking revelations of the ways in which collections were acquired for this region.

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[44] Based on my enquiries at the British Library. Most files I looked at had never been consulted before.

[45] I am aware of one recent art history thesis that make use of the Archer-Randhawa papers. Only the abstract is accessible. Based on this, it deals with the suppression of partition from nationalist narratives of post-independence art in South Asia. Aparna Megan Kumar, 'Partition and the Historiography of Art in South Asia', unpublished PhD thesis, University of California, Los Angeles (2018). A recent art history MA dissertation has also used this material; the title suggests a narrow research focus. Vrinda Agrawal, 'Dispersal of Princely Collections of Paintings and their Acquisition by Dr. M. S. Randhawa for the Chandigarh Museum', unpublished M. A. dissertation, SOAS, University of London (2016).

[46] Edwin Binney III is a case in point. Brinda Kumar uses the Archer papers to understand Binney's collecting, and American engagement with Indian art. Brinda Kumar, 'Of Networks and Narratives: Collecting Indian Art in America, 1907-1972', unpublished PhD thesis, Cornell University (2015).

[47] M. S. Randhawa, *Aap Beeti* (Delhi: Navyug Publishers, 1985).

[48] The 2014 reprint was translated by Tript Kaur with the assistance of a grant from the Oriental Translation Fund of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland. It is available for reference from the RAS Library, and the Centre of South Asian Studies at the University of Cambridge. Page numbers referred to throughout this thesis are as per the 2014 reprint.

[49] Now called the Directorate of Cultural Affairs, Archaeology, Archives and Museums.

I have deployed books and journals on South Asian art history in a novel way; that is, as historical sources, to reconstruct the thrust of the aesthetic discourse they promoted, and evaluate its implications for writing histories of Punjab and India. In addition to these, I have drawn on newspaper articles, and the journals of archaeology, museum, and history associations from libraries in India, Pakistan, and the UK. They are supplemented by a small number of interviews. Most of the latter do not appear in the thesis, but they informed my approach, and enabled me to better engage with actors.

It is a privilege to work with historical material, for what manages to survive is remarkable, and why it does is often a matter of accident. Many of the records I consulted had been marked for destruction at various points in the past, with no subsequent explanation as to why they were spared. It emphasises the element of chance that governs access to, and the availability of sources, in addition to the fact that they are selective in what they reveal.[50] I have accordingly read them critically, both along, and against, the grain.

This project was first conceived as a comparison between the Lahore and Chandigarh Museums' use of previously shared material culture, after partition; and the new regional and national identities they constructed from this raw material. Enduring political tensions in South Asia ensured that my access to Pakistani government archives was restricted, even as I travelled to Lahore, Karachi, and Islamabad. This story has an Indian bias, in consequence. The questions I ask are worthy of pursuit in other regions of India and elsewhere; but I addressed them through Punjab, primarily because of the richness of the Randhawa-Archer correspondence.

Although I use art historical material and engage with the historiography of the discipline, art *criticism* per se has no place in my argument. The way in which museums present collections, on the other hand, does. I visited the museums of Punjab on both sides of the border, Himachal Pradesh, and Kashmir, to see for myself how they displayed and interpreted their Pahari paintings; and travelled through the landscapes that inspired Pahari painters and successive generations of art historians. Together, they

[50] Joan M. Schwartz and Terry Cook, 'Archives, Records, and Power: The Making of Modern Memory', *Archival Science*, 2 (2002), pp. 1-19; Antoinette Burton (ed.), *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005).

helped me to understand my archival sources better, correct for the bias of archival privilege itself; and tap into the power of place, and of museums and objects, as both sources and purveyors of history.

The Chapters

I begin by examining the intersections between professional networks, historic museum and archival collections in postcolonial South Asia, and partition. I analyse the dispute over the return of objects loaned to the Royal Academy for an exhibition of art from the subcontinent from November 1947 to February 1948, to establish the critical role that hitherto unrecognised transnational networks of archaeologists, art historians, archivists and museologists, played in achieving partition. The process of negotiation over museum objects was central to how a range of actors from Prime Ministers, to provincial administrators and museum curators, imagined India and Pakistan in these transformational years.

Next, I step back to consider the global position of museums in the aftermath of World War II and decolonisation, and their changing mandate in the context of the 'shared' international goal of development, through education. Trajectories were similar, and often in conversation, across the Indo-Pakistani border. The museum is shown to have been a platform for debating politics and shaping national narratives. Articulating the meaning and value of their collections was integral to the nationalist project of (re)writing 'modern' histories for India and Pakistan. It also builds on the theme of transnational and cosmopolitan networks shaping national histories discussed previously, to investigate the broad issues that were relevant to evolving museum practice in South Asia. By exploring the above questions, these first two (of six) chapters provide the regional and global, political, historical, and museological, contexts for my wider argument.

From evaluating national narratives and contests over heritage, and the international museum movement, I shift focus by taking a granular approach to

interrogating postcolonial museum practice in South Asia. Narrowing down on East or Indian Punjab, I reveal the (startling; sometimes murky) ways in which museum and archive collections were built up or acquired after partition, and their implications for conjuring the region.

Princely India is a recognised source for modern Punjab's (and India's) museum collections; but it is an underrated and understudied one for writing their history. This oversight is addressed in Chapter IV. At a moment when several versions of the nation were still under debate, I explore the role of Punjab's princely collections in constructing alternative national and regional imaginaries; in better 'integrating' the princes into India; and in subverting that goal by providing cultural currency and thus, political leverage.

Thereafter, the Chandigarh Museum acts as the crucible, drawing together the key strands of my argument, bringing fresh perspectives to existing scholarship on the politics of the Punjab in the aftermath of partition. Not only were Chandigarh and its Museum symbols of Indian 'modernity', the Museum was also a site of cultural contest over the ownership of collections triggered by political changes across the wider region. I discuss the transnational, cosmopolitan Randhawa-Archer network's shaping of a Punjab-centred vision of India through Pahari paintings from the princely courts of the Western Himalayas, and explore what drove the key actors in this network.

These questions are examined from another, complementary angle in the final chapter, by evaluating the aesthetic discourse that the Randhawa-Archer network constructed around Pahari painting, and assessing what they achieved with it for Punjab and India. I examine selected journals and publications that disseminated their views, their varying strategies as writers and art historians for domestic and international audiences, and suggest why and how they might have succeeded in their aims.

The project to centre the nation in Punjab by harnessing the power of the museum (as at the Virasat-e-Khalsa at Anandpur Sahib[51]) is not new. This thesis uncovers its deep

[51] It collapses multiple historical narratives, ignores the multi-religious history (and current reality) of India, and Punjab, and presents the Sikhs *as* Punjab, and the Sikh experience of independence

roots and precedents. It also shows how, for the dethroned princes of Punjab, mobilizing their cultural capital was a way to contest, and reimagine the nation. And it reveals obscure, but enduring, transnational networks of archaeologists, museologists, and art historians who contributed towards accomplishing partition; and thereafter, to the construction and perception of both the region and nation in South Asia.

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and partition as India's. This was my own reading, but others' support it. See William J. Glover, 'The Khalsa Heritage Complex', p. 444.

I

DEFINING THE NATION THROUGH CULTURAL CONTEST

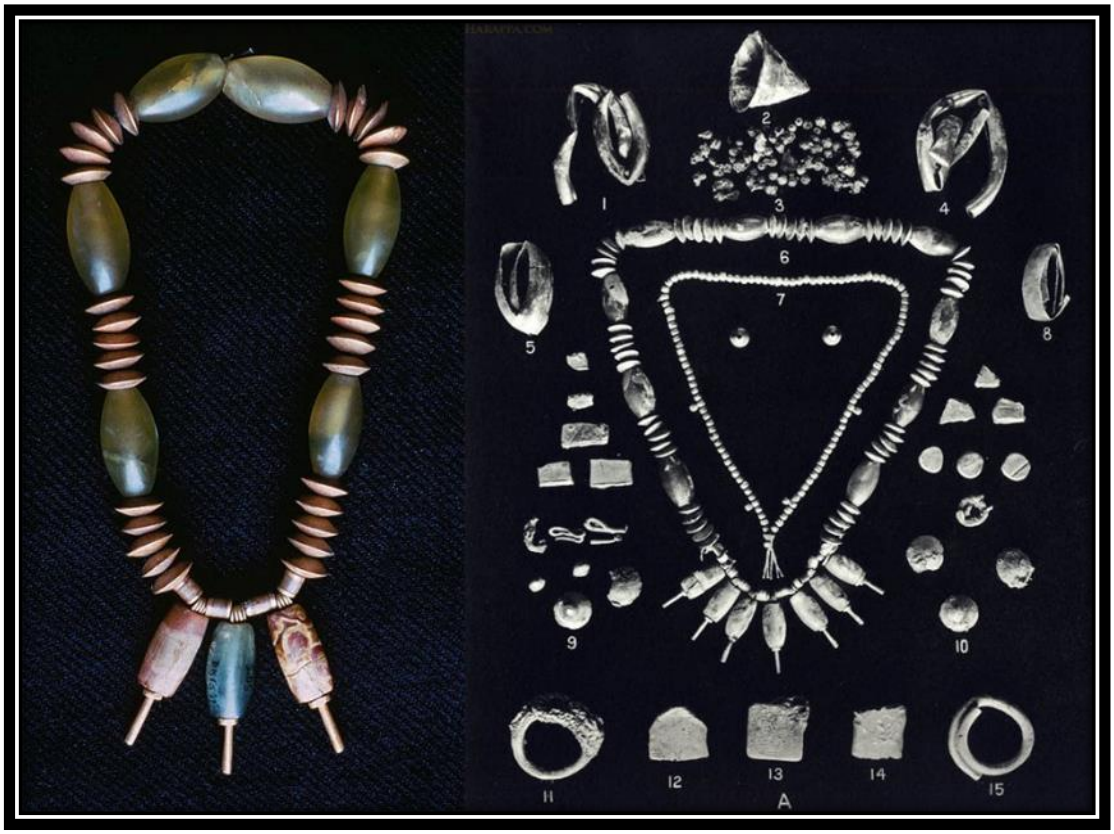

Fig 1.1: 'The case of the split necklace' between India and Pakistan (the latter's share at l).
"India should be allotted 4 pendants out of 7, since in dividing Taxila gold necklace No. 8885 Sirkap only 12 beads and a terminal were given to India as against 13 beads and one terminal to Pakistan."
Director General of Archaeology's note 1949.[1]

'I find that in the two Taxila necklaces there are 15 pendants in one and 11 in another. Perhaps it would be acceptable to both the Governments if in these cases either Govt. gets the odd piece from each.' [2]

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[1] Quoted in Nayanjot Lahiri, *Marshalling the Past: Ancient India and its Modern Histories* (Ranikhet: Orient BlackSwan, 2012), pp. 137-162. Image: *harappa.com* [https://www.harappa.com/blog/case-split-necklace-1, accessed 5 July 2020].
[2] N. P. Chakravarti to Mortimer Wheeler, 10 November 1949, Wheeler Archive E/2/9, UCL Special Collections.

Introduction

As the officials responsible for implementing partition squared off to extract the best deal possible for their respective national and regional governments, the fact that they all knew one another mitigated the tense atmosphere. Notwithstanding the heated argument, fierce defence of their own positions, and accusations of chicanery levelled at the opposite party — after all, they 'were not exactly "external" to the "societal" politics' around them[3] — it was also the case that much of the business of partition was accomplished in just over two months. It reflects the practical cooperation the two governments undertook in order to 'finalise' partition and thus hasten the commencement of their sovereign status.

Joya Chatterji, Pallavi Raghavan, Rohit De, and Anwesha Sengupta have dissected various aspects of this dynamic: from the cooperation and shared sense of purpose (even camaraderie);[4] to the mirroring that often took place in decision-making across a range of issues from the movement of refugees and the management of evacuee property,[5] to conceptions of citizenship.[6] Furthermore, as Chatterji demonstrates, far from being determined by bureaucrats and politicians, these decisions were agile, evolving to

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[3] Anwesha Sengupta, 'Breaking up Bengal: People, Things and Land in Times of Partition', unpublished PhD thesis, Jawaharlal Nehru University (2015), pp. 48-49.

[4] Joya Chatterji, 'An Alternative History of India-Pakistan Relations', lecture delivered at the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, London, 8 March 2012 [https://backdoorbroadcasting.net/2012/03/joya-chatterji-an-alternative-history-of-india-pakistan-relations/, accessed August 2019].

[5] Joya Chatterji, 'Secularisation and Partition Emergencies: Deep Diplomacy in South Asia', *Economic & Political Weekly,* 48:50 (2013), pp. 42-50; Pallavi Raghavan, 'The Finality of Partition: Bilateral Relations Between India and Pakistan, 1947-1957', PhD thesis, University of Cambridge (2012), recently published as Pallavi Raghavan, *Animosity at Bay: An Alternative History of the India-Pakistan Relationship, 1947-1952* (London: Hurst & Co., 2020); Anwesha Sengupta, 'Breaking up Bengal'; Pallavi Raghavan, 'The Making of the India-Pakistan Dynamic: Nehru, Liaqat, and the No War Pact Correspondence of 1950', *Modern Asian Studies*, 50:5 (2016), pp. 1645-1678; Rohit De, 'Evacuee Property and the Management of Economic Life in Postcolonial India' in *The Postcolonial Moment in South and Southeast Asia* ed. by Michael F. Laffan, Nikhil Menon, Gyan Prakash (London; New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018), pp. 87-106.

[6] Joya Chatterji, 'South Asian Histories of Citizenship, 1946-1970', *The Historical Journal,* 55:4 (2012), pp. 1049-1071; Niraja Gopal Jayal, *Citizenship and its Discontents* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013) for a history of Indian citizenship, in which she discusses partition and its impact on debates on citizenship.

accommodate ground realities effected by the 'small but decisive acts of agency by countless ordinary people firmly convinced of the justice of their claims',[7] often in direct opposition to governments' stated policies on those subjects.

This body of work points to the tangible links that continued to bind the two nations together, spilling over physical and ideological boundaries: networks of individuals. Scholarship on partition has filtered down from elite politics[8] to shine a spotlight on this phenomenon, revealing the extent to which it underpinned the process of partition, and challenging the hitherto 'rock solid consensus'[9] on India and Pakistan's antagonistic dynamic. It suggests that webs of people (rather than great leaders) influenced how partition was implemented and contested, shaped state formation, and citizenship, in postcolonial South Asia. Within this framework, Chatterji and others have attended to bureaucrats, diplomats, and (in Chatterji's case) migrants. That this thesis focusses on networks of archaeologists, art historians, archivists and museologists (hitherto seen as irrelevant, or at best tangential to partition and modern South Asian histories) is, therefore, a first.

This chapter unpacks the intersections between professional 'art and culture' networks, historic museum and archival collections in postcolonial South Asia, and partition. It goes beyond Chatterji and Raghavan's argument that 'mutuality and cooperation' was the lynchpin that 'finalised' partition, or that defined Indo-Pakistan relations. Rather, I argue for the primacy of specialist, transnational networks of archaeologists and museologists that not only survived partition, but adapted to become its enablers. They resolved questions over art objects and cultural heritage *before* other contentious issues were settled (such as agreeing pilgrim traffic across borders or sharing the waters of the Indus). This was notwithstanding the fact that collections, as this thesis will demonstrate, were a key resource for these new nations: they were essential for

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[7] Joya Chatterji, 'South Asian Histories of Citizenship', p. 1051.
[8] Anil Seal, *The Emergence of Indian Nationalism: Competition and Collaboration in the Later Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971); Gordon Johnson, *Provincial Politics and Indian Nationalism — Bombay and the Indian National Congress, 1880 to 1915* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1973); Ayesha Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).
[9] Joya Chatterji, 'Secularisation and Partition Emergencies', p. 42.

asserting distinct and ancient identities, and thus their nationhood; their new borders. In consequence, this network's success in achieving attainable, if imperfect, solutions is remarkable.

Challenging the sanctity of the nation as a 'container' or 'silo' is a central argument of transnational studies,[10] and a goal for scholars of heritage too.[11] Focusing on understudied 'art and culture' networks, this thesis shows how *transnational* actors shaped *national* narratives. It questions assumptions on who thinks they have the right to shape the idea of a nation, and what constitutes an 'authentic' national story.

I attend too, to the nature of this network. An established body of work has demonstrated that individuals retain agency even in unequal power relations.[12] But in addition to diffusing agency throughout the network, the changing power dynamics throughout partition (and decolonisation) affected relations within postcolonial South Asia, and between South Asia and the world, thereby transforming the nature of the network. It *flattened* traditional hierarchies, with actors able to achieve results in *collaboration,* the network thriving when individual actors reinforced one another's authority and power. But because these networks were also unstable and changeable, the outcomes were by no means inevitable.

Finally, if as most agree, discourse — and praxis — have as much a role in constituting the nation as the imagination does,[13] then this chapter will demonstrate that contesting cultural assets (which involved everyone from politicians to bureaucrats and

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[10] Sanjeev Khagram and Peggy Levitt (eds.), *The Transnational Studies Reader: Intersections and Innovations* (New York: Routledge, 2008), p. 5 and Introduction.
[11] Brian J. Graham and Peter Howard (eds.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Heritage and Identity* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008).
[12] Notwithstanding disagreements on the extent to which they deploy them. Two classic examples are Nicholas B. Dirks, *The Hollow Crown: Ethnohistory of an Indian Kingdom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); C. A. Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780-1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
[13] The concept of imagining the nation has acquired a life of its own from the phrase originally coined by Benedict Anderson in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London; New York: Verso, 1991, 12th impression). Srirupa Roy makes the connection between discourse and praxis in *Beyond Belief: India and the Politics of Postcolonial Nationalism* (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 2007), although her examples and preoccupations differ from mine.

specialists) was a crucible in which a host of actors evolved a vision of their nation and region, by articulating the value and meaning of objects.

The Networks Around Objects

When Mortimer Wheeler set sail for India in 1944 to take up his post as Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India, he was roughly halfway through an illustrious career. Recruited to implement reform, and with the discipline of a soldier (he served in both world wars) he had a reputation for excellence in fieldwork. He was a seasoned academic and general administrator, having served as Keeper of Archaeology and then Director of the National Museum of Wales (till 1926), followed by the directorship of the London Museum. He had also established the Institute of Archaeology at University College London in 1937.[14]

His experience and energy were apparent as soon as he arrived in New Delhi. After admonishing his new colleagues to get along for the greater good of their chosen discipline, he reminded them of the glory and privilege of working with the rich material culture of India and proceeded to outline his proposed programme of work.[15] 'One of the most charismatic and influential archaeologists in world archaeology in the twentieth century', archaeologists today (and in his lifetime[16]) credit him for his contributions to the development of scientific excavation techniques (many of which continue in use) and his commitment to teaching these methods at field training schools. Not only did many of his students become leading figures in post-independence South Asian archaeology, but his field schools served as a precursor to the formal School of Archaeology that the

[14] Robin Coningham and Ruth Young, *The Archaeology of South Asia: from the Indus to Asoka, c. 6500 BCE — 200 CE* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 80.
[15] R. E. M. Wheeler, *The Archaeological Survey of India, Director General's Report on the Development of the Department, 1944-48, December 1947,* p. 1, Wheeler Archive E/1/10.
[16] For example, British archaeologist O. G. S. Crawford's 'Review of Mortimer Wheeler, *Still Digging: Interleaves from an Antiquary's Notebook* (London: Michael Joseph, 1955)', *Antiquity,* 29:114 (1955), pp. 120-122.

Archaeological Survey of India established in 1959 (renamed the Institute of Archaeology in 1985).[17]

On the cusp of independence, for Wheeler, the 'relics of Indian art, architecture, and material civilization' together represented a 'notable part of the basis upon which a new India may be founded'. Without a 'proper understanding' of their 'immense' historic achievements, 'neither Indians themselves nor the world at large' could 'fully appreciate' what India might be capable of again in modern times. For this reason, Wheeler was keen to effect 'the long overdue provision of a central National Museum, without which Indian art and archaeology can never be adequately conserved and presented'.[18] It could be, as he saw it, a moment of glory for the department, and one which could decisively shape 'its role in the India of the future'. He felt that the 'solid ground' of 'the great heritage of Indian civilisation through the ages' of which it was caretaker, was one on which 'all races, all religions, all politics can agree to meet.'[19]

There was a problem with these grand hopes. That long history, bolstered by the tangible evidence of objects, provided the illusion of solid meeting ground; but in reality, it was fractured and unstable. So, when considering Wheeler's exhortations about a national museum, it is worth reflecting on the tensions embedded in the narrative. They include the movement for Pakistan, as well as the many *other* concurrent visions for independence and nationhood,[20] including those based on language[21] and new

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[17] Robin Coningham and Ruth Young, *The Archaeology of South Asia,* pp. 80-90.
[18] R. E. M. Wheeler, *The Archaeological Survey of India, Staff Memorandum No. 1, 1 May 1944,* pp. 1-2, Wheeler Archive W/13. The proposal (in the form of an Imperial Museum of Archaeology and History) was first made in 1912. R. E. M. Wheeler, *Committee on the Central Indian National Museum of Art Archaeology and Anthropology, April 1946,* p. 1, Wheeler Archive W/13.
[19] R. E. M. Wheeler, *The Archaeological Survey of India, Staff Memorandum No. 1, 1 May 1944*, p. 4
[20] Joya Chatterji, 'Nationalisms in India, 1857-1947' in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Nationalism* ed. by John Breuilly (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 242-264; Rama Sundari Mantena, 'The Andhra Movement, Hyderabad State, and the Historical Origins of the Telangana Demand: Public Life and Political Aspirations in India, 1900-56', *India Review*, 13:4 (2014), pp. 337-357.
[21] Sumathi Ramaswamy, *Passions of the Tongue: Language Devotion in Tamil India, 1891-1970* (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 1997); Paul Brass, 'Elite Interests, Popular Passions, and Social Power in the Language Politics of India', *Ethnic and Racial Studies,* 27:3 (2004), pp. 353-375; Lisa Mitchell, *Language, Emotion, and Politics in South India* (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2009).

archaeological discoveries.[22] If Wheeler was aware of these tensions (as he must have been), he did not let them disturb his vision.[23]

His use of 'relic' throughout is pertinent. The word enfolds two connotations in addition to its primary meaning: that is, an old object, a signifier of times past. When associated with a holy person, such an object attracts an element of reverence; but when compared with recent times, a 'relic' is dated or unfashionable. Describing historic materials as 'relics' could therefore signal a range of meanings. The writer might have meant that objects recognised for their age and historic value called for reverence. But the embedded notion of being passé suggests instead, that Indian art, architecture, and material civilisation produced nothing noteworthy after the relics in question.

The process by which such objects (deemed to have archaeological or antiquity value rather than artistic merit) became the natural heart of the national showcase, had deep roots.[24] Since Wheeler's day, there have also been tectonic changes in how Indian art is perceived and interpreted.[25] But what is relevant here is that despite there being no contradiction in an object being both 'art' *and* 'antique', only archaeological material of all kinds retained 'pedigree' value, explaining the discipline's early influence on the collections and conceptions of independent India's National Museum.

At partition, India did not wish to retain British nationals in positions of authority for longer than strictly necessary. Wheeler demitted office in April 1948, handing over to the epigraphist Dr N. P. Chakravarti ('Chaky'), who had been Joint Director General with Wheeler since 1945.[26] Requiring greater support in establishing a brand-new Department of Archaeology, Pakistan appointed Wheeler Archaeological Advisor from

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[22] Sumathi Ramaswamy, 'Remains of the Race: Archaeology, Nationalism and the Yearning for Civilisation in the Indus Valley', *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 38:2 (2001), pp. 105-145.

[23] Although outside the scope of this thesis, it may also be relevant to keep in mind the politics around national museums in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. Wheeler would have been familiar with these.

[24] See Tapati Guha-Thakurta, *Monuments, Objects, Histories: Institutions of Art in Colonial and Postcolonial India* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2004). Discussed further in Chapter II of this thesis.

[25] See Chapter VI of this thesis.

[26] Obituary of Dr N. P. Chakravarty, *Epigraphia Indica,* 31(1955, reprinted 1987) [https://indianhistorybooks2.files.wordpress.com/2014/03/99999990010444-epigraphia-indica-vol-31.pdf, accessed 25 October 2019].

1950, a role he occupied 'seasonally' until 1958.[27] He helped the new Department establish itself, set up a field school, and supervised excavations, notably at Charsada. The Department nominated him to membership of the Pakistan National Committee of International Co-operation amongst Museums (later the International Council of Museums or ICOM, the professional organisation for museums; part of UNESCO, the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation) and the Museums Association of Pakistan invited him to be its first President in 1949.[28]

Having trained an entire generation of archaeologists, by virtue of his professional credentials and his legacy,[29] Wheeler's position and reputation were formidable throughout the subcontinent and in London.[30] It is unsurprising that politicians, government bureaucrats, colleagues, and former students appealed to him for advice, mediation, and assistance. One of these occasions was at partition, when he was de facto arbiter for the division of movable cultural assets in the subcontinent. The process took over two years to conclude and was intimately connected to the process of nation-building and constructing the national imaginary in both India and Pakistan, as this thesis will show. But embedded within this narrative is the crucial fact that a network of colleagues spanning the new — if hardening — border resolved and implemented this aspect of partition *in collaboration*. Wheeler did not achieve this feat alone.[31]

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[27] His contract was not continuous. However, he remained engaged with Pakistan archaeology and was an advisor regardless of this detail.

[28] Based on Wheeler Archive F/2/3, F/2/5, F/2/7. Also refer to *Proceedings of the Museums Association of Pakistan, First Session, April 1949*.

[29] He shared this legacy with his first wife Tessa Verney Wheeler (1893-1936), who innovated both teaching and excavation methods in partnership with him. Although a role model in her own lifetime, recognition for her work and contributions is more recent. Lydia Carr, 'Tessa Verney Wheeler: Researcher, Excavator, Teacher, Communicator — and Wife', *Antiquity* Project Gallery 320:83 (2009) [http://www.antiquity.ac.uk/projgall/carr320/, accessed 25 October 2019]. Also see Lydia Carr, *Tessa Verney Wheeler: Women and Archaeology Before World War Two* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[30] Jacquetta Hawkes, *Mortimer Wheeler: Adventurer in Archaeology* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1982). This thesis upends Hawkes' characterisation of Wheeler as a heroic figure who achieved results against the odds. For a positive review of Hawkes, and no less admiration for Wheeler forty years after the events analysed in this thesis, see Colin Renfrew, 'The Making of an Archaeologist', *Nature,* 296:5857 (1982), pp. 515-516.

[31] Although castigating Hawkes for hero-worship and a 'gossipy' tone (as disservices to Wheeler, whom he admired) in his review of her book, F. H. Thompson reveals Wheeler's prejudiced,

For instance, in April 1949, he thanked V. S. Agrawala (then the Superintendent for Museums at the Archaeological Survey of India[32]) for assisting F. A. Khan of the Pakistan archaeological department[33] during the latter's visit to New Delhi to partition the archaeological materials there. Agrawala responded promising 'to do my best to make the work of partition at this end as peaceful and helpful as possible'.[34] In August 1949, Agrawala asked Wheeler to intercede when it emerged that a fragment of a sieve from Taxila (amongst the collections spilt at source from the Lahore Museum) was part of a larger whole, asking him to assign the whole to India. While offering other ideas on how to effect the division, Agrawala concluded, 'These suggestions emanate in the spirit in which the whole question of museum partition has been tackled and I hope that a fair decision will be arrived at.'[35] Two months later, he wrote of the 'happy conclusion' of the partition of the Museums Branch, and awaited instructions regarding two items, 'since according to the terms of the Inter-Dominion Agreement,' Wheeler had 'the final say in the matter.'[36] V. S. Agrawal and others maintained a respectful and deferential tone in their communications with Wheeler, but they were not taking orders. It is also evident that Agrawala, Wheeler, and their colleagues wished to *conclude* the business of partition, and that they were doing their utmost to achieve it.

Wheeler retained his Indian connections after his tenure ended at the Archaeological Survey of India. He was the first President of the Museums Association of India (1948); was invited to advise the government; and to lecture on several occasions (the Survey's Centenary celebrations, and the Asian Historical Congress to name but two). He reviewed the functioning of the Survey in 1964-65 and made recommendations

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withering assessment of some (unnamed) junior colleagues as "second-rate men in first-rate jobs". F. H. Thompson, 'Review of *Mortimer Wheeler: Adventurer in Archaeology* by Jacquetta Hawkes (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1982)', *The Antiquaries Journal,* 63:1 (1983), pp. 141-142.

[32] 'Prof. Vasudeva Saran Agrawala: A Bibliographic Survey of his Published Works' (New Delhi: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, 1994), p. 8 [http://ignca.nic.in/PDF_data/vasudeva_saran_agrawala.pdf, accessed 23 October 2019].

[33] Mortimer Wheeler to V. S. Agrawala, 23 April 1949, Wheeler Archive E/2/9.

[34] V. S. Agrawala to Mortimer Wheeler, 25 April 1949, *Ibid.*

[35] V. S. Agrawala to Mortimer Wheeler, 1 August 1949, *Ibid.*

[36] V. S. Agrawala to Mortimer Wheeler, 5 October 1949, *Ibid.*

for greater efficiency and areas of improvement.[37] He also examined papers at the School of Archaeology into the 1960s[38] and advised on the curriculum. When he was not visiting the subcontinent, colleagues and students from both India and Pakistan who passed through London called upon him; and at other times, he remained in touch through a steady stream of letters. He supported applications for training and further study, wrote recommendations, proofread innumerable articles, authored prefaces for books, and contributed to fledgling publications in art, architecture and archaeology and lent them his credibility.[39]

With hindsight, his professional engagements after partition appear to be strategic partnerships. Under pressure to 'perform' on the international stage (as compared to India), Wheeler's position as Archaeological Advisor gave Pakistan's archaeology (and thus its civilizational credentials) instant validity and an international profile. Through television programmes, newspaper articles,[40] the book *5000 Years of Pakistan*[41] commissioned by the Government of Pakistan (Wheeler stated upfront that the title was 'a wilful paradox',[42] considering the nation and its name were no older than partition), and leading tours to the subcontinent for the Swan cruise company,[43] or Fairways & Swinford Travel,[44] he was also instrumental in keeping Pakistan's history and heritage in the public eye. He facilitated long-term research partnerships with American and British (and later, Italian) institutions, supported his French successor Raoul Curiel, and advised on Pakistan's National Museum in Karachi.[45]

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[37] 'Archaeological Review Committee, 1965 — Report' in *Committees and Commissions in India 1947-73, Vol VI: 1964-65* ed. by Virendra Kumar (Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 1975), pp. 318-319.
[38] For instance, examination papers for 1966 and correspondence about the syllabus and what areas to cover, are in Wheeler Archive E/3/1.
[39] As evidenced from Wheeler Archive F/2/3, F/2/5, F/2/7.
[40] Once again, an innovation developed with Tessa Wheeler. Lydia Carr, 'Tessa Verney Wheeler'.
[41] R. E. M. Wheeler, *5000 Years of Pakistan: An Archaeological Outline* (Karachi: Royal Book Company, 1950).
[42] *Ibid.,* p. 11.
[43] For example, see Wheeler Archive W/13.
[44] Brochure in Wheeler Archive, E/3/7.
[45] Based on Wheeler Archive F/2/3, F/2/5, F/2/7.

Fig 1.2: Mortimer Wheeler speaking at the opening of the National Museum of Pakistan, at Frere Hall, Karachi, 1950, in the presence of the Governor General Khwaja Nazimuddin (in the chair), and Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan (to the Governor General's right).[46]

Fig 1.3: Wheeler pointing out exhibits from East Pakistan to the Governor General, with the Minister for Education, Fazlur Rahman at extreme left.[47]

[46] Image: Wheeler Archive V/4/31; Courtesy UCL Special Collections.
[47] *Ibid.*

Fig 1.4: View of Frere Hall, as the National Museum.[48]

[48] Image: Wheeler Archive V/4/32; Courtesy UCL Special Collections.

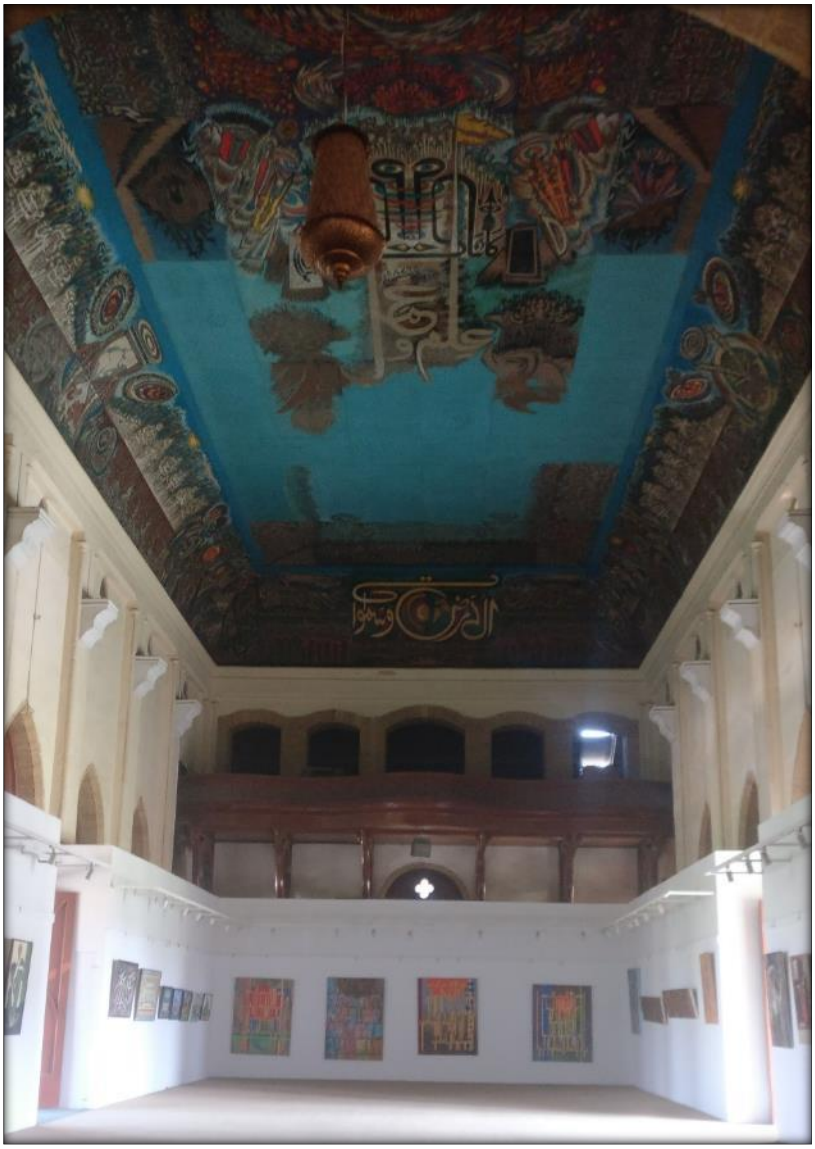
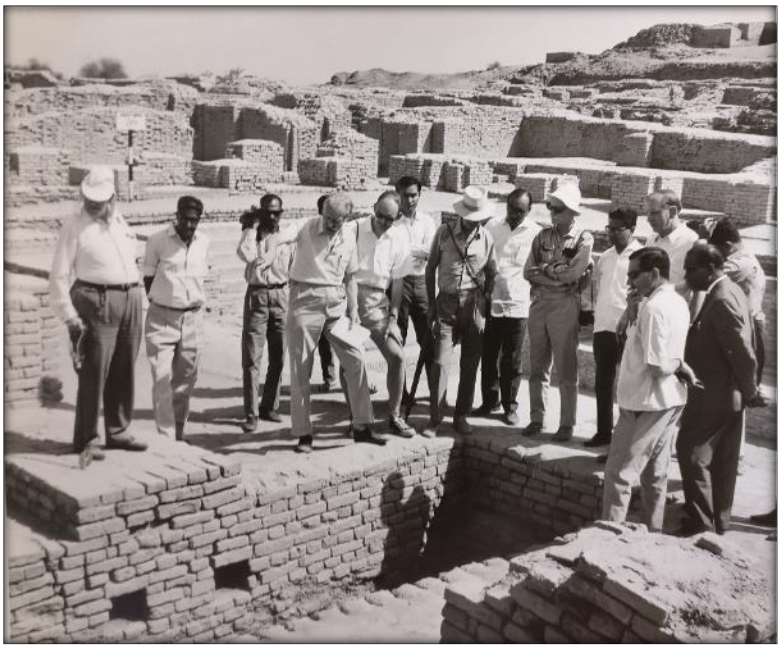


Fig 1.5: Frere Hall in 2018, with a mural by Pakistani artist Sadequain (1923-1987) on the ceiling. It was then being used as exhibition space.[49]

[49] Image: Author.



Figs 1.6 & 1.7: The UNESCO Mohenjo Daro Mission to Pakistan in meetings (above), and on site (below).[50]

[50] Images: 'Visit of UNESCO Mission to Pakistan for preserving Mohenjodaro site', Wheeler Archive V/4/43; Courtesy UCL Special Collections.

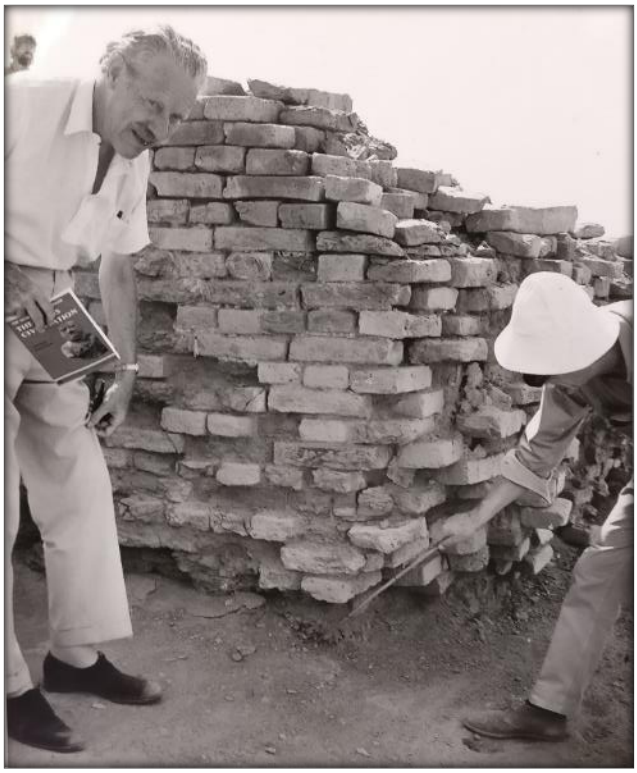
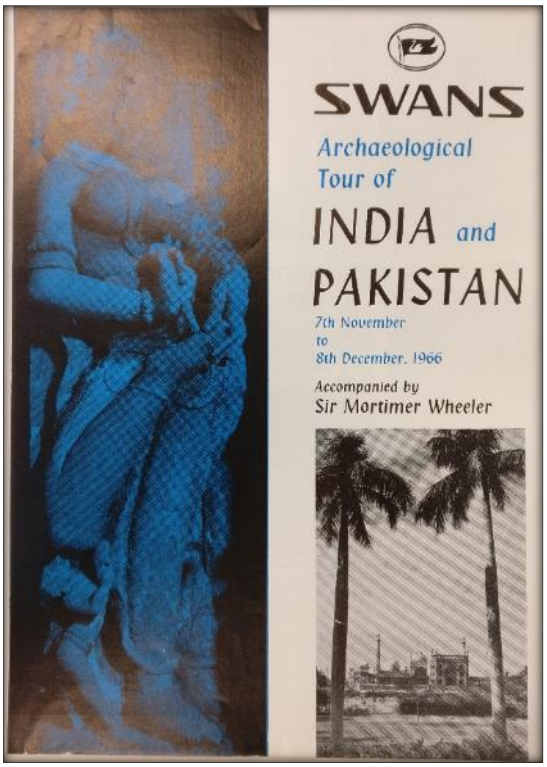
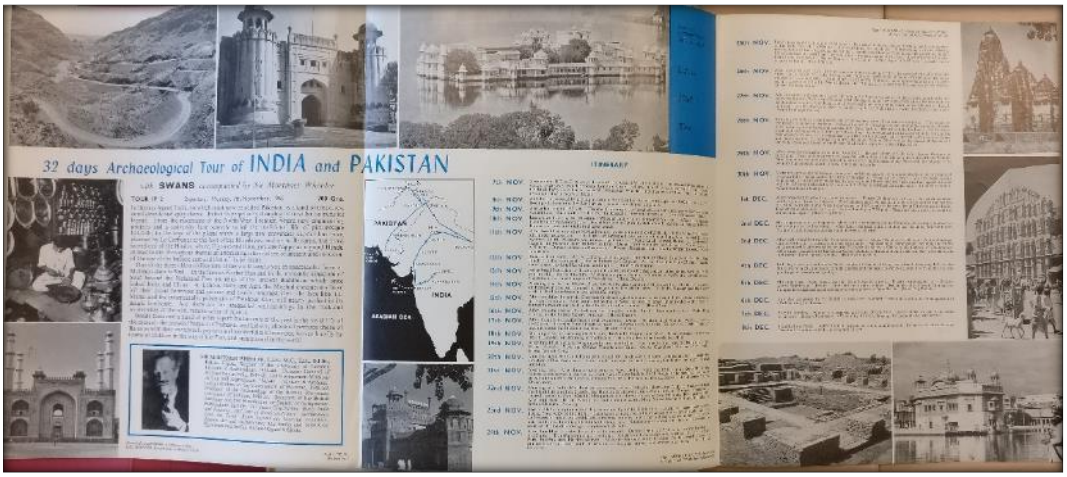


Fig 1.8: Wheeler at Mohenjo Daro, holding a copy of his The Indus Civilization *(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), revised for the third time in 1968.*[51]

[51] Image: 'Visit of UNESCO Mission to Pakistan for preserving Mohenjodaro site', Wheeler Archive V/4/43; Courtesy UCL Special Collections.





Figs 1.9a & b: Brochure for Swan's Archaeological tour of India and Pakistan with Wheeler.[52]

[52] Images: Wheeler Archive W/13; Courtesy UCL Special Collections.

In 1968-69, he headed UNESCO's six-member international mission on Mohenjo Daro to study the effects of the high water table and associated salinity that was threatening it, and suggest solutions.[53] The site was added to the World Heritage list in 1980.[54] The Government of Pakistan awarded Wheeler the Sitara-i-Pakistan in August 1964, in recognition of his services to the country. He accepted with reluctance, for, as he wrote to Harold Shoobert of the Pakistan Society declining a dinner invitation as Guest of Honour, he disliked the fuss. Despite the Government of India bestowing no similar honour upon him,

> 'I do everything I can to avoid distinguishing Pakistan from India, in both of which I find myself equally at home amongst a multitude of friends. In fact, I very nearly declined the S. Pk. [Sitara-i-Pakistan] in this context, but knew that the refusal would be hopelessly misunderstood.'[55]

These Wheeler-negotiated international partnerships with Pakistan contrasted with the Indian nationalist attitude to archaeological exploration after independence. The latter sought to minimise foreign, or at least British involvement,[56] exemplified by the appointment of an American, Grace L. McCann Morley, as Director of the National Museum (in contrast to Pakistan's decision to recruit Wheeler).

At the time of her appointment, Grace Morley had already built an impressive reputation as a museum professional and administrator. She had raised the profile of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art over more than two decades as Director, from 1935-1958. She simultaneously served on various government committees and missions that sought to formulate a role for art in diplomacy. She advised UNESCO on its museum programme in 1946, and took a leave of absence to head its Museum Division

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[53] The reports and correspondence are available in Wheeler Archive F/1/8, F/1/12.
[54] Robin Coningham and Ruth Young, *The Archaeology of South Asia,* p. 81. I discuss the politics of the United Nations and the World Heritage list in the next chapter. Also see Lynn Meskell, *A Future in Ruins: UNESCO, World Heritage, and the Dream of Peace* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).
[55] Mortimer Wheeler to Harold Shoobert, 8 February 1967, Wheeler Archive F/2/7, Folder 2 of 2.
[56] Sudeshna Guha, *Artefacts of History* (New Delhi: Sage, 2015). However, this attitude fluctuated, in both India and Pakistan. There were occasions when Wheeler and others complained about the intransigent Pakistanis not issuing archaeological permits. See Wheeler Archive F/1/11.

from 1947-1949. During this period, she also headed ICOM, and founded and edited the journal *Museum,* with the latest news on 'professional technical matters'.[57]

These hiring decisions had repercussions on the character of the national museums — and thus the national image — that Wheeler and Morley developed and projected. Pakistan's retained a greater emphasis on its archaeological heritage, whereas India's under Morley — with her background in running art museums, her focus on education, and her emphasis on technical competence — took a different approach.[58] But because of changing politics, and the tensions of global power dynamics of the mid-twentieth century (decolonisation and the Cold War in particular),[59] Wheeler and Morley's positions of authority had shifted. Although they had been hired as 'experts', they were no longer unchallengeable; their employers could look elsewhere. They would have had to be cognisant of new sensitivities in these new nations. Nor, as we will see, did they achieve their goals alone.

The Nature of the Network

Historians have re-evaluated (and continue to reframe) the consultant culture and development diplomacy that occurred between the 1950s and 1970s. In recent years, two major points have emerged that are relevant to analysing issues in the archaeology and museum sphere. The continuing influence of colonial knowledge and organisation in shaping the development agenda, is the first. Decolonisation was unevenly distributed across space and time (one could argue it is ongoing) and although it was often a moment of rupture, scholars have shown that continuities (in personnel, systems,

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[57] Grace Morley, 'Grace L. McCann Morley: Art, Artists, Museums, and the SF Museum of Art', Interview by Suzanne B. Riess (Berkeley: Oral History Center, The Bancroft Library, University of California, 1960), pp. 151-157 [https://digitalassets.lib.berkeley.edu/roho/ucb/text/morley_grace_l_mccann.pdf, accessed 3 May 2017]. *Museum* was a new version of *Mouseion*, which used to be published by the International Museums Office of the Institute of Intellectual Cooperation, League of Nations.
[58] See the next chapter for more on Morley's approach and its relevance.
[59] I account for these in greater detail later in this chapter.

strategic interests, thinking) coexisted with change.[60] As a consequence, old patterns resurfaced in a new guise, even if actors may not have been aware of it. Development was thus as much about retaining control over the resource-rich Global South (the location of most former colonies) for the Global North (where most former colonisers were based), as it was about progress.[61] This applied to culture as much as, say, to agriculture.[62]

For example, while adopting a business-like and fair-minded attitude towards partitioning collections in the subcontinent itself, Wheeler was outraged when India and Pakistan claimed the India Office Library Collections (now a part of the British Library). Britain refused to admit their demands and attempts to find a way around the impasse continued into the 1960s. For his part, Wheeler mounted a vigorous public campaign to retain the collections in Britain, partly by deploying the old colonial argument that India and Pakistan were incapable of caring for them.[63] In a similar vein, in his capacity as Honorary Secretary of the British Academy, Wheeler explored proposals to establish British Institutes of Archaeology in India and Pakistan (along the lines of the British School of Archaeology at Rome), chiefly to ensure that these rich fields for scholarship remained accessible for British scholars to harvest.[64]

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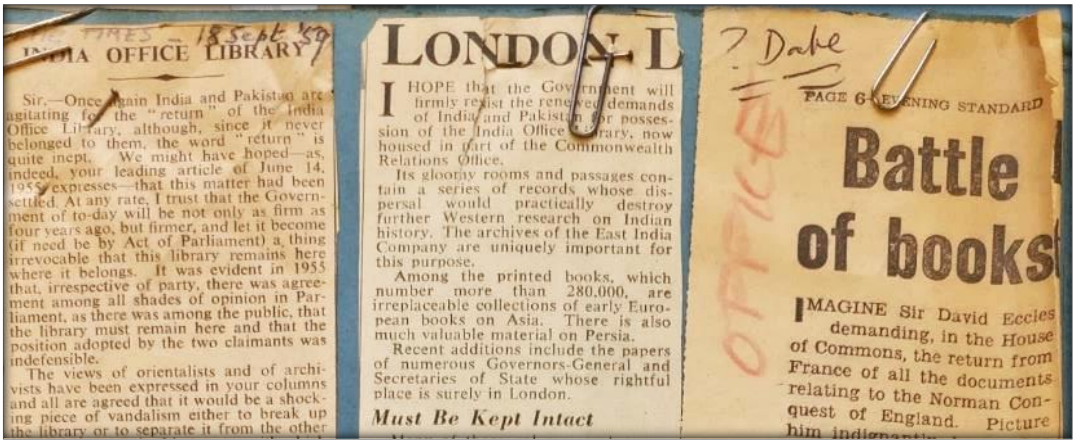
[60] For an overview of the many ways in which decolonisation played out see Ruth Craggs and Claire Wintle (eds.), *Cultures of Decolonisation: Transnational Productions and Practices, 1945-70* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016). Also discussed in the next chapter.
[61] Mark Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and Ideological Origins of the United Nations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).
[62] Lynn Meskell, *A Future in Ruins*; Joseph M. Hodge, *Triumph of the Expert: Agrarian Doctrines of Development and the Legacies of British Colonialism* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2007).
[63] 'India Office Library', Wheeler Papers, British Academy Archive.
[64] 'British Institutes in India and Pakistan — Proposal', Wheeler Papers.



INDIA OFFICE LIBRARY

Sir,—Once again India and Pakistan are agitating for the "return" of the India Office Library, although, since it never belonged to them, the word "return" is quite inept. We might have hoped—as, indeed, your leading article of June 14, 1955 expresses—that this matter had been settled. At any rate, I trust that the Government of to-day will be not only as firm as four years ago, but firmer, and let it become (if need be by Act of Parliament) a thing irrevocable that this library remains here where it belongs. It was evident in 1955 that, irrespective of party, there was agreement among all shades of opinion in Parliament, as there was among the public, that the library must remain here and that the position adopted by the two claimants was indefensible.

The views of orientalists and of archivists have been expressed in your columns and all are agreed that it would be a shocking piece of vandalism either to break up the library or to separate it from the other

LONDON L

I HOPE that the Government will firmly resist the renewed demands of India and Pakistan for possession of the India Office Library, now housed in part of the Commonwealth Relations Office.

Its gloomy rooms and passages contain a series of records whose dispersal would practically destroy further Western research on Indian history. The archives of the East India Company are uniquely important for this purpose.

Among the printed books, which number more than 280,000, are irreplaceable collections of early European books on Asia. There is also much valuable material on Persia.

Recent additions include the papers of numerous Governors-General and Secretaries of State whose rightful place is surely in London.

Must Be Kept Intact

PAGE 6 EVENING STANDARD

Battle of books

IMAGINE Sir David Eccles demanding, in the House of Commons, the return from France of all the documents relating to the Norman Conquest of England. Picture him indignantly

Fig 1.10: Newspaper clippings in Wheeler's file on the 'India Office Library'.[65]

[65] Image: 'India Office Library'; Courtesy British Academy Archive.

The second way to reframe the development decades has been to unpick the interactions between individual actors. Morley, for one, did not see British, French or American museum professionals as the primary audience for *Museum*, because they were 'in places where there is a very highly developed museum profession and organisation.'[66] Instead she aimed it at those in 'far-off places' with 'few museum workers'.[67] She was correct to envision the journal as an international link to the profession; but her characterisation of the global distribution of museum skills reflects what was then a dominant paradigm — that knowledge and expertise flowed only in one direction, from the developed to the developing world. Scholars have shown that it was instead much more balanced, with the 'experts' from Europe or America learning as much as they shared, and experience has shown that 'there is no substitute for local knowledge'.[68] Claire Wintle highlights this in the context of a travelling exhibition on 'Jawaharlal Nehru: His Life and His Times', inaugurated soon after Nehru's death in 1965. The Government of India commissioned the American designers Charles and Ray Eames to develop the exhibition with the new National School of Design at Ahmedabad. By studying the workings of this venture, Wintle shows how an exhibition with a clear nationalist agenda could be so 'infused with transnational connections',[69] foregrounding its collaborative nature, and the mutual exchange that took place.

In a study of the social networks that underlie the collections of the Pitt Rivers Museum at Oxford, the authors note that 'network' functions better as a metaphor rather than a 'theoretical maxim' in the context of museums, collections, and the people connected to them. They stress networks' fluid and flexible nature, contrary to perceptions that they are fixed or contained. They point out that the value of the metaphor is in helping us think about:

> 'assemblages of people and things through small-scale, concrete links that constantly shift. The emphasis should be on how constantly fluctuating

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[66] Grace Morley, 'Grace L. McCann Morley', Interview by Suzanne B. Riess, pp. 151-157.
[67] *Ibid.*
[68] Susanne Koch and Peter Weingart, *The Delusion of Knowledge Transfer: The Impact of Foreign Aid Experts on Policy-making in South Africa and Tanzania* (Cape Town: African Minds, 2016).
[69] Claire Wintle, 'Displaying Independent India Abroad: Nationalism, Cultural Diplomacy, and Collaboration at the Nehru Memorial Exhibition, 1965-2015', p. 85, in *Heritage at the Interface: Interpretation and Identity* ed. by Glenn Hooper (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2018).

> associations between people and things become 'institutionalised' — how the coherence and stability of any given network is maintained through individual motivations, group dynamics, the durability of objects and buildings, and so on…'[70]

The authors have studied the 'endless…complicated, fluctuating circulations of people and things'[71] that generate museum collections, in part, an analytical exercise afforded by the computerisation of detailed documentation records. It also reflects contemporary corrective trends in museums (especially anthropological collections like the Pitt Rivers) to flesh out their collection histories, beyond what the 'collector-as-hero' framework permits.

I suggest that in addition to connecting objects (those divided at partition) and people (those who enabled this division), 'network' is a metaphor that can extend to track the development of ideas. By better populating the networks around objects, we can see the collaborative — symbiotic — flows of knowledge and expertise that have shaped postcolonial South Asia and perceptions of it.

So, although at first glance Wheeler appears to be the lynchpin, without whose decisive action at partition and subsequent support the archaeology of the subcontinent would have unravelled, if looked at more closely, it is a transnational network of archaeologists which emerges as pivotal. It facilitated the division of archaeological collections between India and Pakistan *notwithstanding* a contest for choice objects from the Indus Valley civilisation discussed in the following section. They achieved a 'successful' division of the subcontinent's cultural assets, *despite* the tensions of partition, and the scholarly consensus on the antagonistic nature of India-Pakistan relations outlined earlier.

The Indus collection was split, right down to unique objects like necklaces whose beads were counted out. Wheeler himself effected the division, 'an archaeologist who, above all, should have known that he was severely compromising their integrity.'[72] This

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[70] Frances Larson, Alison Petch, David Zeitlyn, 'Social Networks and the Creation of the Pitt Rivers Museum', *Journal of Material Culture,* 12:3 (2007), p. 217.
[71] *Ibid.*
[72] Nayanjot Lahiri, *Marshalling the Past*, p. 21.

was not a job done well by professional standards; but the measure of success was that it was done at all. Under the circumstances, it is worth speculating on whether the business of partition might have been better achieved by a policy of delegating more: to expert networks rather than bureaucrats, and regional governments rather than escalating all matters to the national level.[73]

The network survived partition (routed through Wheeler), to contribute *both* to Wheeler's own career *and* South Asian archaeology. V. S. Agrawal, N. P. Chakravarti, B. B. Lal, and A. H. Dani (to name but a few former colleagues and students) shared their discoveries or sparred with Wheeler over differing interpretations of archaeological data. These South Asian archaeologists were scholars in their own right. They had insights to share that shaped the course of archaeology in independent India and the wider region, regardless of whether their ideas remain valid or are controversial today.[74] Through letters and drafts of academic papers (on which they sought his comments), they fed Wheeler's own stream of publications and bolstered his reputation as an authority, long after he had ceased to be involved in excavations in South Asia. To cite one instance, in the Preface to *5000 Years of Pakistan*, Fazlur Rahman, Minister of Commerce and Education, Government of Pakistan, recorded at Wheeler's request the assistance Wheeler had received from the Archaeological Department in writing the book, and 'in particular, the notes supplied by Mr. A. H. Dani' on East Pakistan.[75] Wheeler's admirers might term such acknowledgement 'generosity of spirit', but we can now see that there was more to it than that.

The network also impacted upon postcolonial archaeology in the region, and therefore, national histories. Sudeshna Guha traces this through the shifting arguments and counterarguments between Wheeler and his former students and colleagues in interpretations of the Indus sites, which were critical to both India and Pakistan's claims

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[73] T. C. A. Raghavan suggests it might have been more effective, but that was not the policy. See *The People Next Door: the Curious History of India's Relations with Pakistan* (London: Hurst & Co., 2018).

[74] After all, Wheeler's own conception of South Asian civilisation was diffusionist, which has subsequently been much criticised. See Robin Coningham and Ruth Young, *The Archaeology of South Asia,* p. 86.

[75] R. E. M. Wheeler, *5000 Years of Pakistan*, p. 5.

to civilizational status and national identity.[76] But, recalling his comments on receiving the Sitara-i-Pakistan, the two nations were not water-tight compartments in Wheeler's mind. It was but natural that he would mention Indian colleagues' ideas to Pakistani ones, and vice versa, adding a new dimension to the argument that 'mutuality' shaped India and Pakistan's post-independence trajectories. In addition to the political, diplomatic, and bureaucratic arenas, networks were a factor in the process through which archaeologists (and as we shall see, museologists and art historians) articulated the archaeology, history, and cultural identity of the two nations.[77]

The personalities and politics of some of these archaeologists and their research output have already been assessed, and others remain to be explored.[78] But even when historians of South Asian archaeology recover native voices in the colonial narrative[79] or analyse the discipline's postcolonial trajectory, Wheeler looms large;[80] as does Morley in the museum world.[81] Therefore, it is in *flattening* hierarchies that the network metaphor

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[76] Sudeshna Guha, *Artefacts of History*, Chapter V.

[77] See Chapter II of this thesis for a fuller discussion. The longevity of such networks is attested to by a recent review of Dani's contributions to Pakistan archaeology, in which the authors note his collaborations with colleagues around the world, including B. B. Lal and others in India. Rafiullah Khan and Ifqut Shaheen, 'Rescuing from Oblivion: Ahmad Hasan Dani and Study of the Indus Civilization', *Ancient Pakistan,* 28 (2017), pp. 151-162.

[78] For Dani and Lal but also a wider survey, see Robin Coningham and Ruth Young, *The Archaeology of South Asia.* See Chapter II of Nayanjot Lahiri, *Monuments Matter: India's Archaeological Heritage Since Independence* (Mumbai: Marg Foundation, 2017), for an overview of the people, institutions, and archaeological research after 1947. In contrast, there is less published information available on some such as F. A. Khan. Colleagues in Pakistan too were not aware of any biographies on him (Khizar Jawad, personal communication, October 2019).

[79] Nayanjot Lahiri, *Finding Forgotten Cities: How the Indus Civilization was Discovered* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2005).

[80] Himanshu Prabha Ray, *Colonial Archaeology in South Asia: The Legacy of Sir Mortimer Wheeler* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Sudeshna Guha, *Artefacts of History*; Robin Coningham and Ruth Young, *The Archaeology of South Asia.* Nayanjot Lahiri's work on John Marshall appears to be, in part, a response to this, as a rehabilitation of sorts for Marshall, whose ideas Wheeler often dismissed. For example, see Nayanjot Lahiri, 'Coming to Grips with the Indian Past: John Marshall's Early Years as Lord Curzon's Director General of Archaeology in India, Part I', *South Asian Studies,* 14:1 (1998), pp. 1-23, and Nayanjot Lahiri, 'Coming to Grips with India's Past and her "Living Present": John Marshall's Early Years (1902-06), Part II', *South Asian Studies,* 16:1 (2000), pp. 89-107.

[81] Kristina K. Phillips, 'A Museum for the Nation: Publics and Politics at the National Museum of India', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Minnesota (2006).

has value: by conceiving of each actor as a node in a fluid, fluctuating, non-hierarchical web of connections.

These fluctuations and fluidity were occasioned by a range of factors: actors dropped in and out based on opportunity, or the mundane pressures of health and family; they were also affected by changing power dynamics occasioned by global politics. Wheeler, notwithstanding his reputation and legacy, emerges as only *one* among many in a network of actors. Even if not quite *beholden* to his colleagues in the subcontinent, he was plugged into a productive, *collaborative* network with them. Wheeler is dislodged from his throne. It changes the perspective and the emphasis, reveals the interdependence between individuals, reframes the postcolonial development narrative, and, as we shall see, our understanding of how partition was achieved.

A further aspect is the transnational and overlapping nature of networks, in this case of a professional variety (for example, Wheeler and Morley had in common UNESCO, and their professional and government connections in New Delhi). Given the 'endless…complicated, fluctuating circulations of people and things',[82] it is impossible to comprehensively map the overlaps between Wheeler's and Morley's circles. But I will return to this theme in future chapters and, using vignettes that span the globe and the region, demonstrate the importance of focussing on actors as nodes in a web. For, what they achieve together can shape our vision of history and the nation, challenging our assumptions about who has the right, the skills, or the ability to do so.[83]

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[82] Frances Larson, Alison Petch, David Zeitlyn, 'Social Networks', p. 217.

[83] For example, transnational networks have met with suspicion if they are Muslim. Toni Jokinen, 'Self and Community Among Sunnis in Lucknow, c. 1940-1960', unpublished MPhil dissertation in Modern South Asian Studies, University of Cambridge (2015); Taylor Sherman, *Muslim Belonging in Secular India: Negotiating Citizenship in Postcolonial Hyderabad* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

An 'Exhibition of Art, chiefly from the Dominions of India and Pakistan'

On 27 March 1946, the Royal Academy's Committee decided that 'the time was opportune for resuming the project'[84] to hold an exhibition of Indian art in London.[85] This was a weightier observation than might first appear, backed as it was by consultations with three learned societies (the Royal Asiatic Society, the Royal India Society, the Royal Society of Art), the Viceroy, and the Secretary of State for India. For the Royal Academy, it had been a long-standing proposal, conceived as part of a successful series of international exhibitions which had previously featured Persia and China. Interrupted by the Second World War, the Indian project was thereafter accelerated by political developments in the subcontinent.

By 1945, informal discussions had begun. Maie (Ethel) Casey, wife of R. G. Casey, the Governor of Bengal, appears to have initiated them as part of a larger effort to demonstrate appreciation for India in Britain. This came in the wake of a war that Britain had forced India to support,[86] and for which Bengal had paid a breath-taking price. Doubtless, one calculation was that it would soothe the fractured political landscape and counter the crescendo of calls for independence from Britain. Isobel Cripps, wife of Stafford Cripps, also became involved in the project by March 1947. Though Cripps' failed mission lies outside the scope of this thesis, one might argue that its legacy underlay Isobel Cripps' support for the exhibition, and her alertness to its public relations possibilities.

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[84] Committee Meeting, 27 March 1947, 'Indian Art Committee Minutes', p. 112, Royal Academy Archive.

[85] It was not the first. The Burlington Fine Arts Club held one in 1931. Although held for and loaned to by members in the main, it was also open to visitors, and may well have set the stage for, and shaped the 1947 exhibition. Brinda Kumar, 'Exciting a Wider Interest in the Art of India: The 1931 Burlington Fine Arts Club Exhibition', *British Art Studies,* 13 (2019) [https://doi.org/10.17658/issn.2058-5462/issue-13/bkumar, accessed 18 July 2020]. Also see Sarah Victoria Turner, 'Crafting Connections: The India Society and the Formation of an Imperial Artistic Network in Early Twentieth-Century Britain' in *India in Britain: South Asian Networks and Connections, 1858-1950,* ed. by Susheila Nasta (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp. 96-114.

[86] Many princes willingly offered help in keeping with their own codes of conduct and fealty; but one could argue that this was nevertheless within a coercive colonial context.

Given the delicate (even incendiary) political situation between Britain and India, Mrs Casey and the Royal Academy consulted the entire British political establishment, to ascertain whether both political and institutional support would be forthcoming. This included the Prime Minister and the India Office, the Viceroy in India, as well as the doyens of the British museum establishment: Leigh Ashton (Director of the Victoria & Albert Museum), Kenneth de Burgh Codrington (Keeper of the Victoria & Albert's Indian Section) and Basil Gray (British Museum). Rumours got as far as the Musée Guimet Paris even before the exhibition was confirmed.[87]

As Britain's exit from India drew closer and gathered discernible shape, so too did the project. Energetic discussions ensued on how to structure it. The sensitive matter of appointing the right people to committees — people who would lend the exhibition credibility thus helping to secure loans; who could promote it and draw in the crowds — was another focus, perceived as crucial in signalling Britain's deep interest in India. Others wanted to prevent a political appointment for Chairman of the Promoting Committee to avoid distracting from the content (despite the exhibition itself being a political gesture); or ensure representation for the learned societies. Leigh Ashton of the Victoria & Albert Museum was adamant that it was 'absolutely essential that the selection committee at this end should be the controlling body'.[88] His comment reveals the tensions underlying the exhibition, his insistence betraying anxiety over the approaching 'transfer of power': on the one hand, the exhibition was a gesture of recognition and conciliation towards India, but one wished to cede as little control as possible. In an ironic reversal of the colonial paradigm, retaining symbolic control over India through an exhibition appears to have acquired exaggerated importance in the face of the hollowing out of Britain's political power.[89] Given that art exhibitions were a low-stakes diplomatic game, Ashton's striking insistence can also be explained if we perceive that the change in political power dynamics would affect professional networks too; if he sensed that this

[87] Minutes dated 15 October 1945 and 22 July 1946, V&A Indian Section (India Museum, General) 1945-1949 Part XVI NF, V&A Archives.
[88] Minute dated 10 December 1945, V&A Indian Section Part XVI, V&A Archives.
[89] Inverting the target of the argument in Nicholas B. Dirks, *The Hollow Crown.*

was one of the last few opportunities left for British curators and art historians to call the shots.

The exhibition correspondence appears oblivious to the violence and heightened political tension on the ground in the subcontinent. Despite this, those involved were cognisant of the *optics* a blockbuster could produce. In a detailed comment in the files prepared for discussion with Ellen Wilkinson, Minister of Education, the author (most likely Isobel Cripps) noted:

> 'Now we are passing into a new era and at this particular moment when India is obtaining freedom of action I cannot express too strongly the desirability for a fresh aspect to be taken towards the whole of this subject. It is one of the things which may deeply affect the relationship between our two countries.'[90]

In addition to the proposed exhibition, the 'fresh aspect' included recommendations to institute Chairs of Indian Art and/ or Archaeology, and improvements to the display of the Indian Section at the Victoria & Albert Museum. She went on to emphasise:

> 'Almost the chief thing of value to press home is the great educational value of the Exhibition, and how the outcome should bring about a permanent record of Indian's [sic] cultural position and will be useful for all time....I feel so strongly that we have ahead of us a great opportunity and the possibility that if we pursue an imaginative policy with freely flowing ideas under the new circumstances we can make a great contribution in linking up this country and India. They will be watching closely how seriously we take the whole project, always with a picture at the back of their minds of what has happened in the past. We must see to it that we approach the whole problem entirely free of any suspicion and patronage. If we can do this, I am convinced we shall get a response which will surprise even the most optimistic. But it is <u>absolutely</u> essential that we shall view the whole position with new vision."[91]

[90] 'Note on Indian Exhibition to be discussed with Ellen Wilkinson & Others', V&A Indian Section Part XVI, V&A Archives.
[91] V&A Indian Section Part XVI, pp. 2, 4, V&A Archives. Emphasis in the original.

Although the best-known art historical analyses of this exhibition take decolonisation, and nationalism in South Asia into account,[92] Isobel Cripps' repeated emphasis on doing things differently, and the value of the project, hint at greater depths to what was at stake. Other, concurrent, global reconfigurations were exerting their own compulsions, in addition to post-partition entanglements between India and Pakistan.

The Cold War was chief among these. It spilled over into Britain's efforts to retain India within the Commonwealth for strategic (Anglo-American) geo-political reasons,[93] and its own prestige,[94] notwithstanding the implications for subcontinental politics.[95] But this was not all. India and Pakistan had to negotiate their position with respect to a bi-polar world, whilst engaged in reimagining Asia, and exploring alternate modes for a post-War and postcolonial international order.[96]

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[92] Tapati Guha-Thakurta, *Monuments, Objects, Histories*, pp. 175-204; Kavita Singh, 'Museums and the Making of the Indian Art Historical Canon' in *Towards a New Art History: Studies in Indian Art* ed. by Shivaji K. Panikkar, Parul D. Mukherji, Deeptha Achar (New Delhi: D. K. Printworld, 2003), pp. 335-357; Kavita Singh, 'The Museum is National' in *India: A National Culture?* ed. by Geeti Sen (New Delhi: Sage Publications/ India International Centre, 2003), pp. 176-196. I discuss aesthetic discourse further in Chapter VI of this thesis.

[93] Anita Inder Singh, *The Limits of British Influence: South Asia and the Anglo-American Relationship, 1947-56* (London: Pinter Publishers; New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993). For a more recent review of Cold War politics and South Asia, see Paul McGarr, *The Cold War in South Asia: Britain, the United States and the Indian Subcontinent, 1945-1965* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

[94] Anita Inder Singh, 'Keeping India in the Commonwealth: British Political and Military Aims, 1947-49', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 20 (1985), pp. 469-481; Harshan Kumarasingham, 'The "New Commonwealth" 1947-49: A New Zealand Perspective on India Joining the Commonwealth', *The Round Table*, 95:385 (2006), pp. 441-454.

[95] Michael Brecher, 'India's Decision to Remain in the Commonwealth', *Journal of Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, 12:1 (1974), pp. 62-90; Michael Brecher, 'India's Decision to Remain in the Commonwealth: A Supplementary Note', *Journal of Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, 12:2 (1974), pp. 228-230; W. David McIntyre, '"A Formula may have to be Found": Ireland, India, and the Headship of the Commonwealth', *The Round Table*, 91:365 (2002), pp. 391-413; Mohammad Waseem, 'Unscrambling of the British Empire: India and Pakistan as 'Unequal' Members of the Commonwealth', *South Asian History and Culture*, 7:1 (2016), pp. 73-84. The continued value of Commonwealth membership to India has been debated, and fluctuated. For a personal diplomatic point of view, see K. Srinivasan, 'India and the Commonwealth', *The Round Table,* 88:351 (1999), pp. 445-448. For a more wide-ranging assessment see Beth Kreling, 'India and the Commonwealth: A Symbiotic Relationship?', *The Round Table*, 98:400 (2009), pp. 49-66.

[96] Cindy Ewing, 'The Colombo Powers: Crafting Diplomacy in the Third World and Launching Afro-Asia at Bandung', *Cold War History*, 19:1 (2019), pp. 1-19. Also see Shigeru Akita, Gerold Krozewski, Shoichi Watanabe (eds.), *The Transformation of the International Order of Asia: Decolonisation, the Cold War, and the Colombo Plan* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015).

This is a bare-bones summary of the fluid and tense state of international politics at the time, but it is clear that there was an urgent need to manage and balance competing agendas. Empires and superpowers in Europe and North America had not only to accommodate, but be seen to welcome, the newly decolonised and emerging polities (or powers) of Asia, and soon after, Africa. It is no surprise that the organisers of the proposed India exhibition agreed that the British government must fund the enterprise, if it were to yield currency in goodwill. There was the bonus that His Majesty's Government's backing would encourage the princes to lend works, since they might otherwise be wary of doing so.[97]

In some ways, the period mirrors the politics of the interwar years, during which the 'diplomacy of display'[98] was inaugurated at the Royal Academy. International exhibitions of art were held throughout the 1920s and 1930s, and as Ilaria Scaglia notes, they provided opportunities to demonstrate peaceful relations by showcasing the 'practical cooperation' that was possible between even antagonistic governments. Regardless of their success rate, she argues, the number of non-governmental, transnational actors involved meant that 'the individual aims of nation states or empires were temporarily downplayed if not ultimately sidelined.'[99] It had been a deliberate use of performative politics to build peaceful relations in a changing world, and it was now required once again.

This insight more fully explains why Isobel Cripps and her associates were keen to promote an Indian art exhibition. Both the British and the Indians were attuned to the 'messaging' possibilities, for themselves and for each other. Underlying it was the imminent change in power dynamics that would affect scholarly and professional, as much as political relations. After the selection committee returned from a visit in May 1947, its Chairman, Richard Winstedt, commented on the Indian enthusiasm and eagerness 'to make it a success', fuelled by 'national pride', but doubtless, also professional art historical and archaeological eagerness to redress the balance of the

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[97] Note on the exhibition, author unclear, undated, but possibly attached to a note dated 2 February 1946, initialled 'GW'. RAA/SEC/24/33/4, Royal Academy Archive.
[98] Ilaria Scaglia, 'The Diplomacy of Display: Art and International Cooperation in the 1920s and 1930s', unpublished PhD thesis, SUNY Buffalo (2011), pp. 22-57.
[99] *Ibid.*

discourse in their fields. He added that the material 'would certainly impress all lovers of art in Europe and Americans too.'[100] Once, it may not have mattered what the Americans thought of British accomplishments, but that nervous remark reveals the ways in which contemporary political (post-War and Cold War) anxieties inflected discussions on art, and vice versa.[101]

The exhibition was a model of 'practical cooperation'.[102] In addition to a call for loans to the British public, the Royal Academy drew up lists of potential private and institutional lenders in Britain, Europe and America, and asked that an Indian Committee be constituted, headed by Sarojini Naidu (at this time Governor of the United Provinces[103]). The two committees exchanged preliminary lists of objects and finalised them when a representative British delegation drawn from the committee in London visited India.[104] The Indian Committee shipped the bulk of the loans it gathered from Bombay; they sent items from Peshawar, Karachi and Lahore's museums separately. The exhibition, which opened on 29 November 1947 and ran until 29 February 1948, was thus enabled by a transnational network, with a variety of actors that included individual collectors, institutions and their staff, art historians, archaeologists, politicians, and bureaucrats. It was a network that surrounded *objects* in the first instance (what better evidence of their power?), and its inter-continental scale offered an unparalleled opportunity to perform politics through the 'diplomacy of display' in a churning post-War and postcolonial world. At the same time, it was a moment when long-established power dynamics within these networks were on the cusp of change.

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[100] 'Note on the Discussion held at the India Office on Wednesday 14 May, 1947', V&A Indian section Part XVI, V&A Archives.

[101] See Susan S. Bean, 'Post-Independence Indian Art and the American Art World, 1953-1970' in *Indian Painting: Themes, Histories Interpretations. Essays in Honour of B. N. Goswamy* ed. by Mahesh Sharma and Padma Kaimal (Ahmedabad: Mapin Publishing/ Osianama, 2013), pp. 378-389. Bean argues that the early exhibitions of modern Indian art in the United States were linked to Cold War politics and a development agenda in the first instance. Discussed further in Chapter II of this thesis. Also see Brinda Kumar, 'Of Networks and Narratives'.

[102] Ilaria Scaglia, 'The Diplomacy of Display', pp. 22-57.

[103] Roughly equivalent to Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand today.

[104] There is a research opportunity to delve into the politics and mechanics of how objects were selected and collected for this exhibition, especially at the India end.

The Squabble Over Antiquities

The exhibition closed in 1948 with significant losses. Additional costs were split four ways amongst the Royal Academy, and the British, Indian and Pakistani governments.[105] As Walter Lamb (Secretary to the Royal Academy) noted to Stafford Cripps (then the Chancellor of the Exchequer), 'apparently the public at present [was] disinclined to attend to Indian culture'. The excellent lighting, press reviews, and the fact that it had been the most comprehensive show of Indian art in Europe the world had ever seen (by the Royal Academy's own estimate and others'), had made little difference. 'Selling' it to the public had also required something as mundane as paper, which, in war-ravaged Britain, was scarce and expensive. It had, he feared, resulted in an inadequate explanation of all this strange art.[106]

For the Royal Academy, there were the expected logistical challenges of selecting and securing loans, arranging packing, transport and insurance, printing guides and souvenirs, and installation. But unforeseen problems also emerged. In the immediate aftermath of partition, disputes arose over the exhibition's title. During an Executive Committee meeting on 22 September 1947, it emerged that,

> 'after some negotiation Lord Mountbatten had arranged with Pandit Nehru, Mr Jinnah and Mrs Naidu that the title of the Exhibition should be "Exhibition of Art from the Dominions of India and Pakistan". After further discussion it was resolved that the title to be used on the catalogue and the posters be "Exhibition of Indian Art, chiefly from the Dominions of India and Pakistan"'.[107]

Juggling political sensitivities against the need for a snappy title with better instant recall ('India' was a word the British public knew[108]), the Royal Academy defended its

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[105] RAA/SEC/24/33/3. The curation of the Royal Academy exhibition and its role in later forming the National Museum collection is also discussed by others such as Tapati Guha-Thakurta in *Monuments, Objects, Histories.*

[106] Walter Lamb to Stafford Cripps, 16 February 1948, RAA/SEC/24/33/3. See Chapter VI of this thesis for changing perceptions on Indian art in the context of my investigation. For an overview, see Kavita Singh, 'Museums'.

[107] 'Indian Art Committee Minutes', p. 154.

[108] The issue would also later plague the Victoria & Albert Museum and is covered in Chapter VI of this thesis.

decision to the Commonwealth Relations Office with just weeks to go before the opening. While they printed 'the agreed wording on the catalogue, circulars, tickets etc.',[109] they were adamant that their

> 'publicity experts say that it would be fatal to the popular appeal if we used it as it stands on the posters, and we propose to put on these: "Exhibition of Indian Art, chiefly from the Dominions of India and Pakistan." This will also in some measure placate Dr. Puri, the Secretary of the Indian Committee, who has arrived in London, and who had not heard of any change from "Exhibition of Indian Art", as originally agreed with his Committee. He states emphatically that most of the Indian owners would never had lent to the Exhibition if they had known of the change made in the title.'[110]

That the Viceroy had personally to negotiate and seek compromise on a detail, reveals the change in power dynamics already at work between the 'Indian' and British committees:[111] it was not in London's control, as Leigh Ashton had insisted it should be. Nehru and Jinnah's participation foregrounds the importance that *they* perceived cultural display (in particular, this exhibition), to have. It foreshadowed the cultural contest that was to unfold over the archaeological exhibits, which I will argue, was a crucible in which the nation was defined, by (and for) all those involved. The Royal Academy too, scrambled to 'placate' Dr Puri, a respected archaeologist who would have been sensitive to the advantages of linking the antiquities in the exhibition with India alone. He did not hesitate to voice his discontent, and must have gauged that he would have to be heard.

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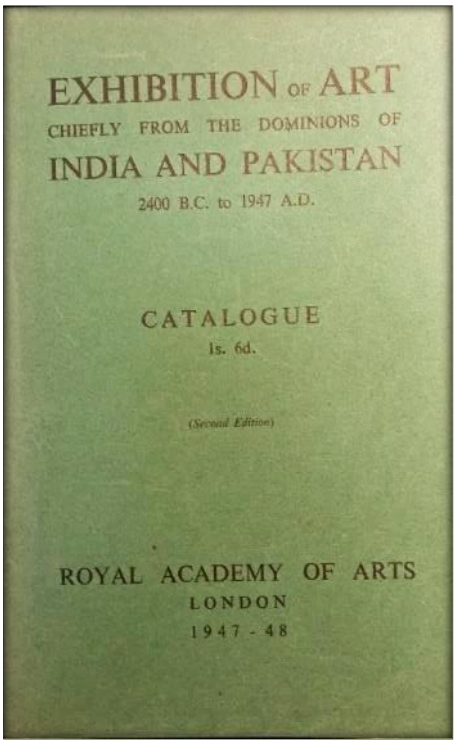
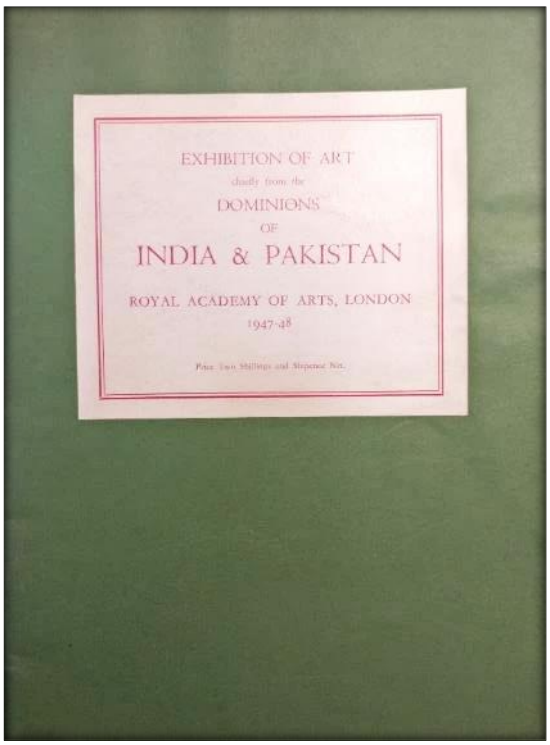
[109] Letter from Walter Lamb, to the Commonwealth Relations Office, 8 November 1947, RAA/SEC/24/33/2.
[110] *Ibid.*
[111] Claire Wintle substantiates this in 'Decolonising the Museum: The Case of the Imperial and Commonwealth Institutes', *Museum and Society,* 11:2 (2013), pp. 185-201. She studies the impact of decolonisation, international politics, and power dynamics on the workings of the Commonwealth Institute; the anxieties they caused, and the opportunities that were afforded.





Figs 1.11a & b: (left) Cover of the catalogue on thin paper with no illustrations except a plan of the galleries; and (right) the Country Life publication with black and white illustrations and glossy paper.[112]

[112] Images: Courtesy Royal Academy Archive.

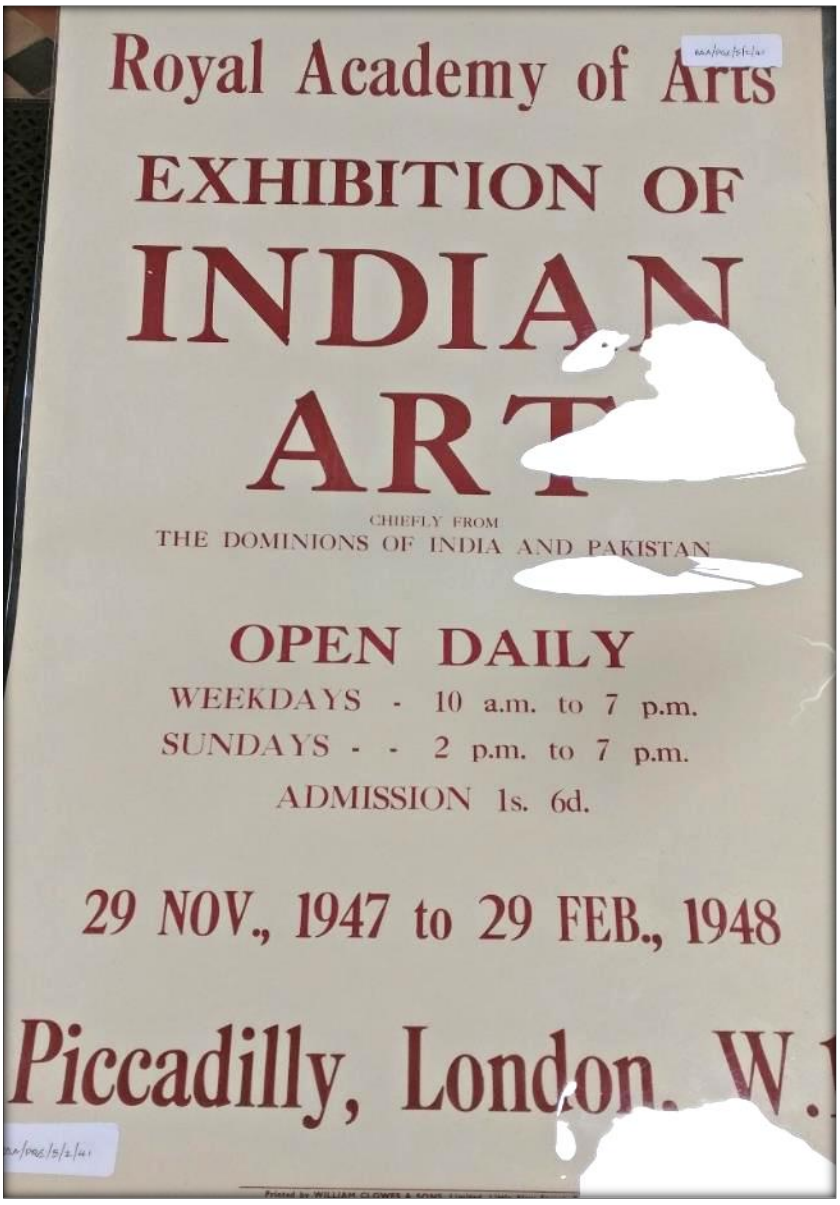


Fig 1.12: Exhibition poster.[113]

[113] Image: RAA/PRE/5/2/41; Courtesy Royal Academy Archive.

Scholars have noted the 'civilizational' identity that India retained at partition, and knowingly traded on thereafter,[114] which would explain the India Committee's staunch opposition to the name change. Pakistani bureaucrats and politicians too were aware that the name of their country was a neologism, which led to "'PR stunts" aimed at projecting Pakistan as a distinct and new nation-state with a rich civilization and history dating back to antiquity'.[115] So as the exhibition drew to a close in January 1948, the stakes grew higher. Someone was sent to 'check up' on the Mohenjo Daro and Taxila exhibits, pointedly described as having been 'sent from Pakistan'.[116] Later that same month, someone was sent again on 'rather urgent' business, to compile a complete list of exhibits of Mohenjo Daro and Taxila: the Government of Pakistan alleged, it had received incorrect information on the matter.[117]

By 1948, India and Pakistan were in the process of settling outstanding issues between themselves through a series of Inter-Dominion conferences. The Royal Academy exhibits, as well as the collections of the Lahore Museum and the Central Antiquities Museum New Delhi were on the agenda, and as will become clear, intimately connected in the eventual quid-pro-quo. The thing to note, however, is that this was no longer a niche matter for curators and administrators, with tangential political relevance. It had become a *bilateral* issue, played out, as we shall see, on an international stage.

There were two aspects to the scramble for cultural assets at partition: those which lay within the territories of India and Pakistan, and those that were outside their new borders. The assets included museum, archaeological, archival, and library collections. Practicalities appear to have determined some decisions, as in the case of buildings, which were immovable; language or religion decided others;[118] and legal manoeuvring

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114 For instance, see V. P. Menon, *The Transfer of Power in India* (Calcutta: Orient Longmans, 1957), p. 405.
115 Ali Usman Qasmi, 'A Master Narrative for the History of Pakistan: Tracing the Origins of an Ideological Agenda', *Modern Asian Studies*, 53:4 (2019), p. 1078.
116 A. F. M. K. Rahman, Secretary Education, Pakistan High Commission to Walter Lamb, 6 January 1948, RAA/SEC/24/33/2.
117 A. F. M. K. Rahman to Walter Lamb, 17 January 1948, RAA/SEC/24/33/3.
118 Urdu records from the Sikh court of Lahore were earmarked for Pakistan as they were equated with Muslim culture. In this context see Francesca Orsini (ed.), *Before the Divide: Hindi and Urdu Literary Culture* (New Delhi: Orient BlackSwan, 2010). Walter N. Hakala, *Negotiating*

retained the Imperial Library, the Asiatic Society of Bengal's and the Indian Museum's library in Calcutta.[119] We must consider the 'Exhibition of Art, chiefly from the Dominions of India and Pakistan' against this milieu of complex negotiations on a variety of subjects, of which cultural assets formed one part.

When it was time for the exhibits to return to the subcontinent, the situation deteriorated. There were three main parties to the dispute: the Royal Academy as the borrower; and the governments of India and Pakistan as the lenders, represented in London by their High Commissioners. Each party marshalled its legal advisors. India and Pakistan entered the fray with gusto and tenacity. In addition to this, since the British Government was one of the sponsors of the exhibition, various departments within it had their own views to express. As Chancellor of the Exchequer, Cripps was faced with footing some of the deficit; and the Foreign and Commonwealth Relations Office took a special interest, given that this dispute between two prospective members had a bearing on how future relations within the new Commonwealth (then still being negotiated) might be conducted.[120]

The Royal Academy wrote to both Habib Ibrahim Rahimtoola (High Commissioner for Pakistan) and V. K Krishna Menon (High Commissioner for India), to inform them that since its agreement was with the India Committee, India, in its view (reflecting the advantages of India's established name), was where they thought the exhibits should return. They proposed to return only those that came from Karachi, Peshawar, and Lahore to Pakistan.

Languages: Urdu, Hindi and the Definition of Modern South Asia (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016) demonstrates the role of dictionaries and lexicographers in both evolving and cementing the political divide over language.

[119] Anwesha Sengupta, 'Breaking up Bengal'; File 15-48/48 A3, Ministry of Education, National Archives of India.

[120] My account of the dispute is based on RAA/SEC/24/33/3, and /1, /2, /4, Royal Academy Archives; quotes are individually referenced. I have also incorporated information from File 31-132/48-O.S.V., File 10-12/48 Pak (A), File 12(33A)-Pak III/49, File 8-33/48 Pak I, Ministry of External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations; File 15-7/49 A3, Ministry of Education; National Archives of India. I was unable to gain access to the corresponding Pakistani ones. However, they reference one another's communications enough to reconstruct the tone, in addition to the content of the deliberations.

Instead, Krishna Menon (on instructions from New Delhi) insisted that *all* items should return to India so that the original India Committee could receive and disperse the loans, which the latter argued, was its responsibility. In hindsight, this was sound reasoning since many loans had come from the Indian princes. Even though these were not under dispute, they could well have objected to a division of exhibits in London, which may have resulted in their property being shipped to the wrong country by accident. For although India and Pakistan were neighbours on the map, they might as well have been on different continents when it came to recovering property across a shared border. In fact, as late as 1950, the India Committee forwarded an enquiry from the Comptroller of the Jodhpur Household to the Secretary of the Royal Academy, enquiring about the return of some loaned items that had not yet been received in Jodhpur.[121]

In the evolving dispute, conducted through legal advisors on three sides, diplomats and bureaucrats grappled with what, for most, was new terrain. With feedback from archaeological and museum professionals like Wheeler and Chakravarti, they categorised the exhibits into three: a) objects from museums now in Pakistan; b) objects from museums now in India; and c) objects sent from the Central Asian and Antiquities Museum New Delhi (originally lent from the Lahore Museum for a temporary display in 1946, but with the intention of displaying them in a Central National Museum).[122] The last group primarily contained items from Indus Valley sites, and Taxila (renowned in later centuries as a site of learning).

Pakistan's position was that objects in the first category should return to Pakistan, pointing out that it raised no objection to the second category returning to India. The crux of the matter was the third category. Pakistan's lawyers argued that these objects belonged to their new country. To their dismay (for it upset the balance of power in negotiations for Pakistan's share of category three) the Royal Academy returned the second category to India in July 1948. This was based on a technicality: all parties agreed

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[121] Letter from the Comptroller of the Jodhpur Household to the Secretary of the India Committee dated 25 March 1950, forwarded to Walter Lamb, RAA/SEC/24/33/3. It is unclear where the fault lay in this case, or how it was resolved.

[122] Nayanjot Lahiri, *Monuments Matter*, p. 20. The claims hinged on the intention to display them in a national museum at Delhi, and whether it implied that India could claim rightful ownership.

in principle that categories one and two ought to return to their geographic origins in either country. Britain's partiality towards India for strategic reasons is a credible reason for this move, notwithstanding the Royal Academy's genuine desire to be rid of responsibility for these objects. In a letter notifying Dr N. P. Chakravarti (who had taken over by then from Mortimer Wheeler as Director General of Archaeology) of the shipment, the Royal Academy's Registrar commented on the 'very unhappy position' which the dispute had placed his institution in, and hoped 'that a settlement will soon be reached.'[123]

On the same principle, the Royal Academy tried to return the first category to Pakistan, and the third to India, writing to inform High Commissioner Krishna Menon as a matter of form. He protested. The official line was that India neither claimed ownership nor contradicted Pakistan's claim to the first category. Rather, it considered them 'under dispute' while other assets and liabilities were still being sorted out by the two governments. Krishna Menon insisted that the Royal Academy should either retain the items until such time that the Dominion governments resolved all outstanding matters, or ship everything to India. Offering a sweetener for a decision in its favour (which would have provided leverage in other negotiations with Pakistan) the Government of India offered to settle accounts at once *and* cover the exhibition's financial losses.

In August 1948, the Government of Pakistan instructed High Commissioner Rahimtoola to hold course, as a 'joint directive from the two Dominion Governments in regard to the exhibits belonging to Pakistan in London [was] already under consideration and it is proposed to take it up at the next Inter-Dominion conference'.[124] In spite of this, D. N. Mitra (legal representative of the Indian High Commission) again attempted to settle matters in his client's favour by offering to indemnify the Royal Academy 'against all claims and demands of the Pakistan Government in relation to the return of the

[123] Walter Lamb to N. P. Chakravarti, 21 July 1948, RAA/SEC/24/33/1.
[124] Copy of letter from Deputy Secretary to the Government of Pakistan, to the Educational Attaché at the Pakistan High Commission, dated 21 August 1948, RAA/SE/24/33/3.

exhibits to the India Committee.'[125] India's willingness to spend money it did not have[126] highlights the perceived importance of these assets, as does their presence on the Inter-Dominion conference agenda. Unlike railway or industrial equipment (or any other asset that has featured in scholarly enquiry), cultural assets were uniquely important for a sense of identity, a point asserted by a range of actors who feature in this thesis, and of vital importance for new nations in particular.[127] Therefore, the process of claim and counterclaim over historic materials, and through it, articulating and imagining the nation was also, I argue, a significant component in the evolution of India and Pakistan's sense of nationhood.

At the Inter-Dominion conference of December 1948, India dropped its objection to the first category returning straight to Pakistan (rather than via Bombay).[128] My sources do not specify why. However, one could speculate on the possibilities: a manifestation of the desire to 'finalise' partition;[129] as part of a quid-pro-quo on other matters; or because the real prize was the archaeological material in the last batch of exhibits, whose fate hung in the balance until the conference of April 1949:

> 'In the case of lists 1A, items 8 and 9, and 1B, items 9 and 10 (girdle and necklace from Mohenjodaro), and in list 11A, items 5 and 15 (two necklaces from Taxila), it has been decided that these shall be divided equally between Pakistan and India. It has further been agreed that Dr. R. E. Mortimer Wheeler, Archaeological Adviser to the Government of Pakistan, who is returning to the U. K. at the beginning of May 1949, shall carry out this division on behalf of the two Dominions.'[130]

The communication included detailed lists that specified the division, including what constituted 'half' in the case of each necklace.

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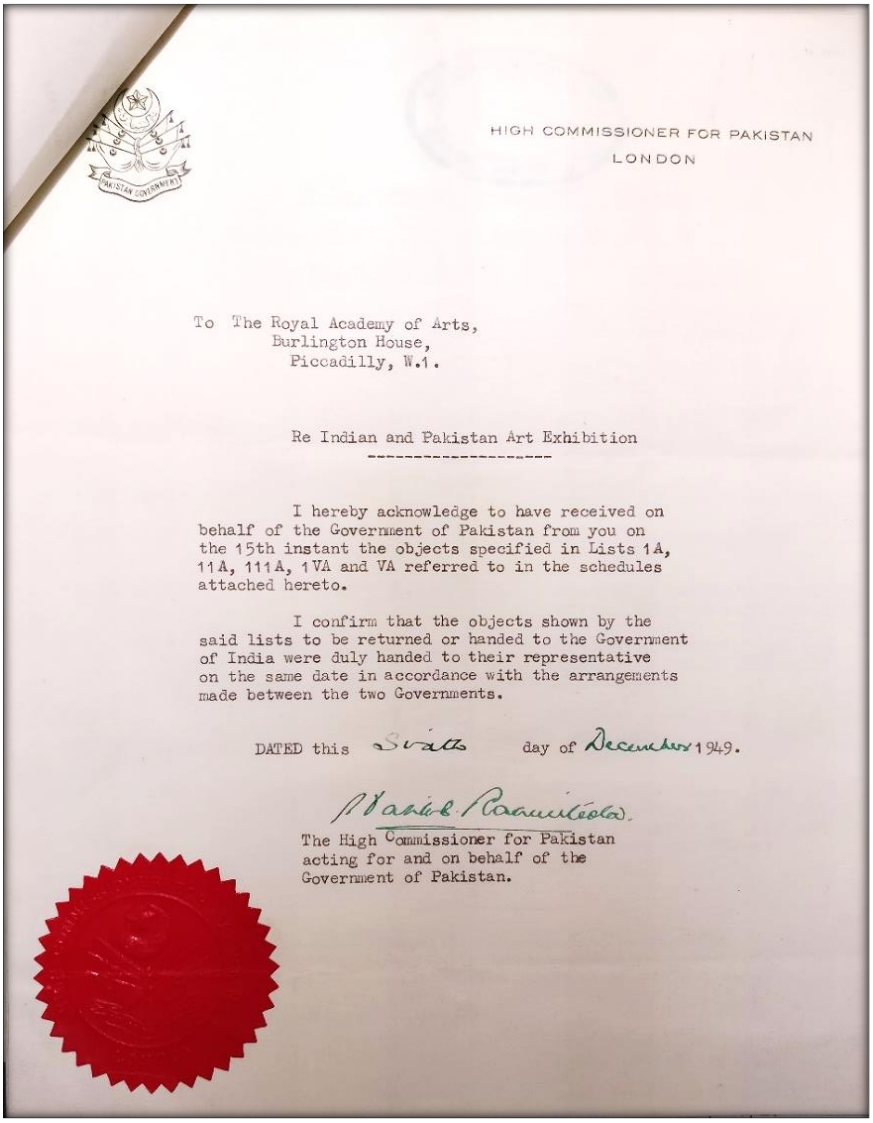
[125] R. A. Morgan on behalf of D. N. Mitra to the Royal Academy, 1 November 1948, RAA/SEC/24/33/3.
[126] Michael Brecher, 'India's Decision to Remain in the Commonwealth', pp. 64, 82. Much of India's cash reserves were locked up in sterling credit accrued during the World War II, and negotiating its release was vital to the country's development.
[127] Johnathan R. Gillis (ed.), *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 9. Also see Flora E. S. Kaplan (ed.), *Museums and the Making of "Ourselves": The Role of Objects in National Identity* (London: Leicester University Press, 1994).
[128] Royal Academy to Wilde, Sapte & Co., 9 February 1949, RAA/SEC/24/33/3.
[129] Pallavi Raghavan, 'The Finality of Partition' and *Animosity at Bay*.
[130] Sanderson, Lee & Co. to Wilde, Sapte & Co., 12 May 1949, RAA/SEC/24/33/3.



HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR PAKISTAN
LONDON

To The Royal Academy of Arts,
Burlington House,
Piccadilly, W.1.

Re Indian and Pakistan Art Exhibition

I hereby acknowledge to have received on behalf of the Government of Pakistan from you on the 15th instant the objects specified in Lists 1A, 11A, 111A, 1VA and VA referred to in the schedules attached hereto.

I confirm that the objects shown by the said lists to be returned or handed to the Government of India were duly handed to their representative on the same date in accordance with the arrangements made between the two Governments.

DATED this Sixth day of December 1949.

Habib Rahimtoola.

The High Commissioner for Pakistan
acting for and on behalf of the
Government of Pakistan.

Fig 1.13: Signed and sealed receipt from Habib Ibrahim Rahimtoola, High Commissioner for Pakistan in London, on behalf of the Government of Pakistan. The weary Walter Lamb had not only ensured that the High Commission representatives signed receipts on the spot, but that the two High Commissioners also signed and sealed legally binding receipts, along with the final checked lists of partitioned objects. The corresponding receipt from India was not in this file.[131]

[131] Registrar to Francis Sapte, 15 November 1949, RAA/SEC/24/33/3. Image: RAA/SEC/24/33/3; Courtesy Royal Academy Archive.

In parallel to the legal and diplomatic process (which dragged on until November 1949), Wheeler had been in touch with colleagues in India and Pakistan over the Royal Academy fracas. For instance, when V. S. Agrawala wrote to Wheeler about the 'happy conclusion' of the partition of the Museums Branch, it was soon after the April 1949 conference. He briefed him of the outcome, whose implementation required Wheeler to work with Dr N. P. Chakravarti.[132] Chakravarti in turn wrote to Wheeler on 10 November:

> 'I returned here[133] yesterday and found that the Pakistan Govt. had agreed to let the East Punjab Govt. its share of the Lahore Museum antiquities. I have today got the letter of authority issued by the Ministry of Education to the High Commissioner for India giving detailed instructions about the partition. Of course, you will have to do the division on behalf of both the Governments even if there is somebody present from the High Commissioner's office who will have no knowledge of the exhibits. I am leaving everything to you…Kindly drop me a line when the partition has been completed so that we can both have peace. I find that in the two Taxila necklaces there are 15 pendants in one and 11 in another. Perhaps it would be acceptable to both the Governments if in these cases either Govt. gets the odd piece from each.'[134]

The East Punjab Government's share of the Lahore Museum will feature later in this chapter, and in the remainder of the thesis. The outstanding point to note here is the seminal role of this network of archaeologists in achieving partition, and their obvious desire to do so, however debateable the outcome. Wheeler responded a few days later, reporting a successful division on 15 November 1949,[135] twenty months and two weeks after the exhibition had closed, to the Royal Academy's relief. In another letter to Chakravarti later that month, Wheeler remarked that they could have resolved all their disputes many months previously, had it not been for 'all this Inter-Dominion nonsense';[136] Chakravarti did not disagree. In parallel, Wheeler wrote to M. A. Latif at the Ministry of Commerce and Education of Pakistan, stressing the 'exceedingly important

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132 V. S. Agrawala to Mortimer Wheeler, 5 October 1949, Wheeler Archive E/2/9.
133 To New Delhi; he had just returned from London, where he had met Wheeler.
134 N. P. Chakravarti to Mortimer Wheeler, 10 November 1949, Wheeler Archive E/2/9.
135 Mortimer Wheeler to N. P. Chakravarti, 18 November 1949, *Ibid.*
136 Mortimer Wheeler to N. P. Chakravarti, 25 November 1949, *Ibid.*

things…in Pakistani hands' that could be put into the National Museum.[137] It is an example of an intervention to reassure and thus *finalise* the division which had been effected.

Constructing the Nation by Contesting Ownership

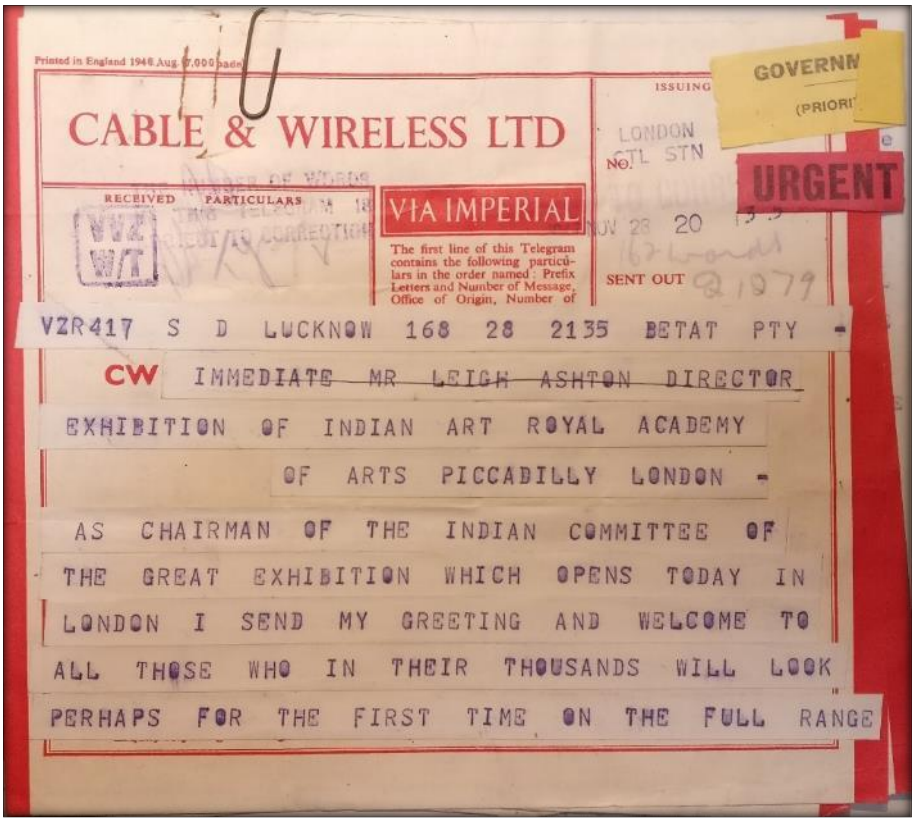
What did the exhibition and the return of loaned objects mean to India and Pakistan? Although their troubled relations from the start is one way of understanding the dispute, what was so special about category three?

Deeming Indian art worthy of display provided a way to redress a historically jaundiced view of it. It was a politically opportune time to do so for Britain, as already discussed, but also for India. Co-curating the exhibits through an India Committee enabled India to assert some control over its own image, and infused the entire exercise with high hopes for India's future. The three-part telegram Sarojini Naidu sent to the Royal Academy at the opening (which the Academy intended to publish), is worth reproducing in full, since it encapsulates all these sentiments:[138]

> AS CHAIRMAN OF THE INDIAN COMMITTEE OF THE GREAT EXHIBITION WHICH OPENS TODAY IN LONDON I SEND MY GREETING AND WELCOME TO ALL THOSE WHO IN THEIR THOUSANDS WILL LOOK PERHAPS FOR THE FIRST TIME ON THE FULL RANGE
>
> AND SPLENDOUR OF INDIAS ART AS INTERPRETED IN NOBLE STONE AND RADIANT COLOUR THROUGH THE CENTURIES [.] NEVER SINCE EMPEROR ASOKA IN BC 246 SENT HIS SON AND DAUGHTER ON A PIOUS MISSION TO PREACH THE BEAUTIFUL DOCTRINE OF THE BUDDHA HAS AN EMBASSY MORE LOVELY OR SIGNIFICANT CROSSED OUR FRONTIERS THAN THIS RICH COLLECTION WHICH

[137] Mortimer Wheeler to M. A. Latif, 16 November 1949, Wheeler Archive F/2/3.
[138] Telegram to the Royal Academy from Sarojini Naidu, 28 November 1947, RAA/SEC/24/33/2.

WE SO LOVINGLY AND LABORIOUSLY GATHERED FROM EVERY PROVINCE TO CARRY INDIAS ANCIENT MESSAGE TO THE MODERN WORLD [.] MAY THE WORLD PAUSE TO UNDERSTAND, ACCEPT AND ACCLAIM THE ELOQUENT AND ENDURING TESTIMONY TO THE GENIUS OF INDIA REVEALED BY HER PAINTERS AND SCULPTORS IN WORKS OF IMPERISHABLE ART. SAROJINI NAIDU.



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CW IMMEDIATE MR LEIGH ASHTON DIRECTOR

EXHIBITION OF INDIAN ART ROYAL ACADEMY

OF ARTS PICCADILLY LONDON -

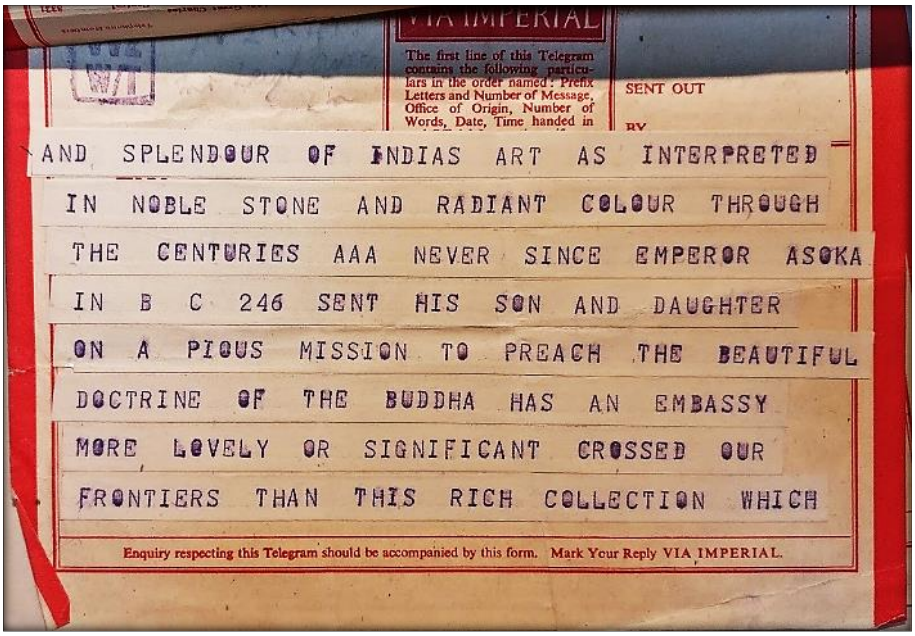
AS CHAIRMAN OF THE INDIAN COMMITTEE OF

THE GREAT EXHIBITION WHICH OPENS TODAY IN

LONDON I SEND MY GREETING AND WELCOME TO

ALL THOSE WHO IN THEIR THOUSANDS WILL LOOK

PERHAPS FOR THE FIRST TIME ON THE FULL RANGE



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ON A PIOUS MISSION TO PREACH THE BEAUTIFUL
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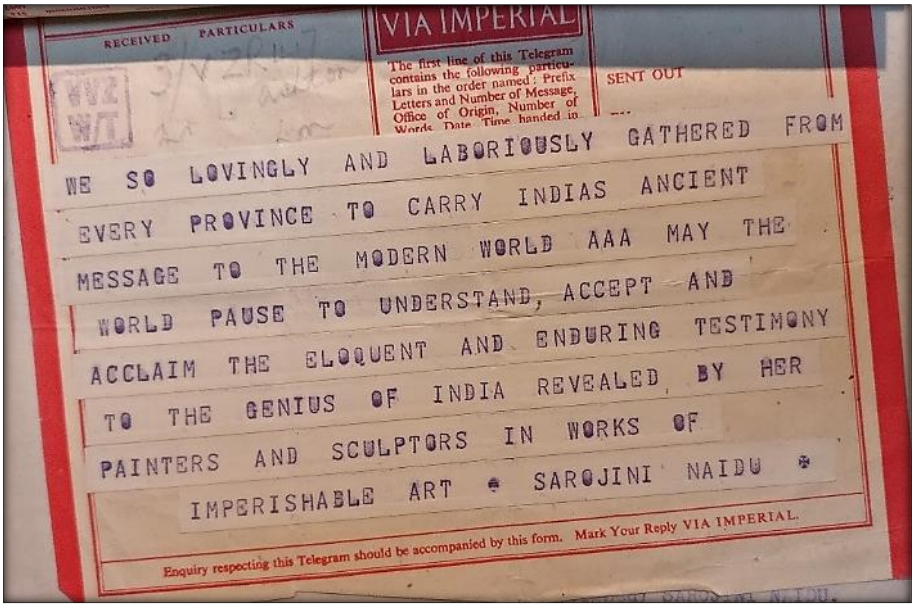

RECEIVED PARTICULARS

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SENT OUT

WE SO LOVINGLY AND LABORIOUSLY GATHERED FROM
EVERY PROVINCE TO CARRY INDIAS ANCIENT
MESSAGE TO THE MODERN WORLD AAA MAY THE
WORLD PAUSE TO UNDERSTAND, ACCEPT AND
ACCLAIM THE ELOQUENT AND ENDURING TESTIMONY
TO THE GENIUS OF INDIA REVEALED BY HER
PAINTERS AND SCULPTORS IN WORKS OF
IMPERISHABLE ART * SAROJINI NAIDU *

Enquiry respecting this Telegram should be accompanied by this form. Mark Your Reply VIA IMPERIAL.

Figs 1.14a-c: Sarojini Naidu's three-part telegram to the Royal Academy.[139]

[139] Images: RAA/SEC/24/33/2; Courtesy Royal Academy Archive.

The corrective nature of the endeavour shines through, re-positioning India as a source of inspiration to the world. Naidu presents its pedigreed heritage as equal to, or even exceeding that of Europe. There was a studied silence about Pakistan, notwithstanding the fact that it featured in the subtitle of the poster, the title of the accompanying souvenir and catalogue, and had a claim to many of the collections on display. That Pakistan's representatives too wished to claim these credentials for their country is thus unsurprising, and it is this which explains their tenacity in the subsequent dispute over exhibits.

David Lowenthal has characterised national identities as having an 'obsessive emphasis on [being] exclusive, unique, and fiercely acquisitive', leading to a great deal of conflict and tension. He identifies two typical modes of articulation: boasts of pre-eminence and precedence clashing with others', and contesting claims over the same icons or markers of heritage.[140] The Royal Academy dispute — including the kerfuffle over the change in title — accords with both these paradigms and explains the fierce contest over the archaeological remains from the Indus valley and Taxila. Ownership of these objects would permit greater or lesser claims of antiquity, borne out by the increasing awareness of archaeological heritage and the 'antiqued'[141] titles of publications on India and Pakistan. Wheeler's *5000 Years of Pakistan* chimes with art historian Hermann Goetz's *Five Thousand Years of Indian Art* (1960). Goetz and Wheeler would have known each other professionally in India, before independence, but there is no evidence that Goetz's title was a direct response to Wheeler's. Nevertheless, it points to a trend, and an awareness of the value of antiquity at least in Government, regardless of the tastes of the reading public. [142]

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[140] David Lowenthal, 'Identity, Heritage and History' in *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* ed. by Johnathan R. Gillis (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 49.
[141] As Sumathi Ramaswamy has shown in 'Remains of the Race'.
[142] I will return to the subject of the reading public's tastes in Chapter VI of this thesis. However, there was regular mention of museum exhibits, the partition of collections, the Royal Academy exhibition, and other cultural assets (some under dispute) between 1946-1948, and occasionally later, until 1953 in the *Times of India* and the *Eastern Times*. A rough count produced 30 articles based on search parameters such as 'Lahore Museum', 'museum', 'Punjab Museum'. A further 30 articles in the *Times of India* and 7 in the *Eastern Times* on exhibitions and museums appeared until the 1960s. Some topics overlapped with those already mentioned.

Exhibitions constitute a political arena in which a range of actors, from curators, to sponsors and visitors, assert and contest definitions of identity and culture.[143] Denise Gonyo has demonstrated that this has a particular resonance in South Asia, given that the region has long experience of being exhibited as a part of colonial display, and the attendant hegemonic vision of a controlling empire. Gonyo asks how Indian visitors to imperial exhibitions might have subverted such ideas and adapted exhibitions to their own use. She refers to written accounts of visits to the Crystal Palace exhibitions at Sydenham and the Colonial and Indian Exhibition of 1886 by educated Indian elites, who responded to these occasions with their own readings, many of which were published and disseminated. She then links these to the Indian National Congress' adaptation of the exhibitionary model, 'especially the notion that display equalled or led to progress',[144] and the nationalist exhibitions the Congress staged between 1901 and 1905. Although using the framework of the imperial and colonial exhibition — based, she argues, on these travelogues, some by elites who were members of the Congress — nationalist exhibitions subverted it and presented another India. The Congress displays posed a conscious contrast to the colonial narrative — by presenting India as industrial or modern, or through arbitrating what was Indian art or design.

The Indian — and by extension Pakistani — political elite were thus no strangers to the power of display, having harnessed it themselves in service to a national political project.[145] Indeed, it explains the enthusiasm for (or at least lack of objection to) the

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143 Ivan Karp, 'Introduction' and Carol Duncan 'Art Museums and the Ritual of Citizenship' in *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display* ed. by Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine (Washington, D. C.; London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), pp. 1-18, 83-103.

144 Denise Gonyo, 'Envisioning India: South Asians, Exhibitions and the Development of Nation in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Brighton (2015), p. 237.

145 Albeit retained by the independent Indian state for slightly different purposes, the industrial exhibition model continued to perform its function of displaying progress and declaring belonging; the 'unity in diversity' of India. Alexandra McCarter, 'An 'Industrial Wonderland': Building the Indian Nation with Industrial Fairs', unpublished MPhil dissertation in Modern South Asian Studies, University of Cambridge (2013). Janaki Nair offers a counterpoint, exploring the changing function of the exhibition from the princely angle, by examining the annual Dusshera exhibition of Mysore. Janaki Nair, 'Mysore's Wembley? The Dasara Exhibition's Imagined Economies', *Modern Asian Studies*, 47:5 (2013), pp. 1549-1587. The case of Pakistan might be less researched but there is evidence for this too in a newspaper article: 'Pakistan Exhibition', *Eastern Times,* 15 December 1945, Centre of South Asian Studies Archive.

Royal Academy exhibition, despite partition. So, it is also no surprise that both staked anxious claims to their shared patrimony, in service of a modified political project: that of independent nations, with established civilizational pedigree.

There is a further and finer point to do with the notion that one attains 'true' historical consciousness when one is able to achieve distance from history, to observe and comment on it 'dispassionately'. Indians had long been characterised as lacking in historical consciousness since they did not have 'modern' histories;[146] by the same token, the colonial eye saw them as living an unbroken, ancient reality.[147] Museums today (especially those showcasing aboriginal or First Nations cultures) would be careful to showcase both continuity and change. But it is possible to see how the process of laying claim to archaeological objects with the ultimate goal of displaying them in national museums, was as much a claim to modern sensibilities or outlook through distancing, as it was about establishing civilizational status. Indeed, the very loan of art objects from a (former) colony for 'proper' display in a 'real' art gallery in the heart of the metropole, could itself be read as a contribution to the process of distancing, and claims to modernity.

It was not *national* ownership that concerned the Royal Academy, but rather lending institutions. For India and Pakistan by contrast, this dispute was not only a question of who owned what, and what those objects might permit in the way of civilizational claims to greatness or antiquity. The *exchange itself* was also a platform on which to enact and thus reiterate their nationhood, through the cultural contest that their bureaucrats and diplomats negotiated. Practice, after all, makes perfect. But, at the same time, the hitherto unnoticed factor is the role of the Chakravarti-Agrawala-Wheeler-Khan-Dani transnational network in achieving a successful resolution in the face of India and Pakistan's competing goals.

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[146] Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincialising Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), pp. 6-11.
[147] A phenomenon more fully explored in Chapter VI of this thesis.

Partitioning Punjab's Heritage

In addition to bilateral negotiations between the Pakistan and Indian governments on national assets and liabilities, simultaneous discussions were held at the regional level in partitioned provinces, including East Punjab. Although each part of divided Punjab was subject to the overarching policy decisions of its own national government (it has recently been suggested that greater regional initiative and independence in resolving disputes might have been more effective[148]), there was nevertheless sustained dialogue and arbitration across the border, which was similar to the national-level negotiations detailed in the previous section.

There was a last-minute glitch to resolving the dispute with the Royal Academy because of the Government of India's instructions 'that the division and handing over of the Exhibits in the custody of the Royal Academy in London should wait till the Government of Pakistan arrange to make over to India certain Exhibits…'.[149] The exhibits in question were those due from the Lahore Museum from West Punjab, now in Pakistan, to East Punjab in India. Following the Arbitral Tribunal Award of 1948, S. N. Gupta, the museum officer tasked with the job, had stored them separately.[150] But disagreements with Pakistan about the antiquities of Taxila, Harappa and Mohenjo Daro delayed their despatch,[151] sometimes at the behest of the East Punjab government, and at others, the Government of India, for strategic reasons. Eventually, the Pakistan Government 'let the East Punjab Govt. have its share of the Lahore Museum antiquities,' and the dispute over the exhibits lent to the Royal Academy was settled.[152] The glitch is instructive, revealing the different priorities of the East Punjab Government, of which more below.

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148 T. C. A. Raghavan, *The People Next Door*.
149 Copy of letter from D. N. Mitra to Wilde, Sapte & Co., 29 August 1949, sent to the Royal Academy, RAA/SEC/24/33/3.
150 Samarendranath Gupta had also authored the *Catalogue of Paintings in the Central Museum, Lahore* (Lahore: Baptist Mission Press, 1922).
151 Nayanjot Lahiri, *Monuments Matter,* p. 20.
152 N. P. Chakravarti to Mortimer Wheeler, 10 November 1949, Wheeler Archive E/2/9.

In 'Our Share Of Exhibits To Be Obtained From The Central Museum, Lahore', G. L. Chopra (Keeper of Historical Records, East Punjab) listed what East Punjab could expect, and voiced his concerns.[153] First were 'original Paintings about 1,000/- in number', which he considered 'among the most valuable of the exhibits of the various sections.'[154] He emphasised the need for security and 'careful scrutiny at the time of taking over because the West Punjab authorities attach great importance to them'.[155] He feared that their 'anxiety to exchange some of these with the Paintings which have fallen to their share' might lead to East Punjab being 'hood-wink[ed]…by substituting mere sketches in place of some of these Paintings."[156]

Chopra does not explain why he considered the paintings so important. They consisted of a mix of primarily Mughal and Rajput schools, and Pahari paintings from the Punjab Hills, now Himachal Pradesh. Although the status of Pahari painting was not as established as it is today, one might speculate that in addition to their inherent art historical value, Chopra was responding to their provenance as 'Punjabi', in contrast, to 'foreign' Mughal works.[157]

Next on the list were '28-30' manuscripts, classed as miscellaneous, followed by 'Ancient coins, some 8,000 in number' which he also considered valuable, as they were 'very early items.'[158] But he thought East Punjab's claim to them 'may possibly be disputed by the West Punjab,' based on a conversation with the Curator of the Lahore Museum, 'who stated that he had no papers or authority with him to show that we had any share in their collection of clins.[sic]'[159] From this rather cursory list, age and provenance appear to have been the criteria for assessment.

'Exhibits To Be Taken Over From The Record Office, Lahore' included old, out of print and rare library books, original documents dealing with areas in East Punjab, and

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153 G. L. Chopra to the Director of Public Instruction, for forwarding to the Chief Secretary, 'Partitioning of Lahore Record Office', pp. 33-35, Basta 60 P-III, Punjab State Archives, Patiala.
154 *Ibid.*
155 *Ibid.*
156 *Ibid.* Emphasis in the original.
157 For more on this distinction, see Chapters V and VI of this thesis.
158 G. L. Chopra to the Director of Public Instruction, for forwarding to the Chief Secretary, 'Partitioning of Lahore Record Office', pp. 33-35.
159 *Ibid.*

old weapons and arms.[160] The file relating to the partition of these assets suggests a 50:50 division of library books.[161] Records on the other hand, were divided based on which regions they related to, and the language they were written in. Thus, the Persian material went to West Punjab, and the Khalsa records to the East because of their association with Maharaja Ranjit Singh's court and his importance to the Sikhs. The parties thus negotiated various ratios for different assets. Some, such as the even division of books and regional allocation of records suggest a 'practical' approach, whereas the language-based division of material reflected beliefs about the identity of specific parts of Punjab, tied to the identities of their religious majorities.

Some of this detail is familiar to historians, but a further question has not yet been posed: why did the Central and Provincial governments have different priorities when it came to the collections? Chopra was excited about paintings, but Indus antiquities do not appear on his list. Were jurisdiction and prior ownership the sole factors that mattered?

Although that might provide part of the answer, there are also other possibilities. Chopra's assessment of the value of the Lahore Museum's collections, and East Punjab's share of it, suggests that his priorities were the geographic origin of objects in conjunction with their antiquity. The latter is explained by the fact that young nations feel the need of an ancient past, compared to established ones. Museum collections of suitable age provide it.[162] The geographic origin of objects mattered because it helped counter feelings of being unmoored and uprooted, and the loss of identity expressed in both official and personal accounts of partition resulting from a 'loss' of history.

I also speculate that the concurrent debates on the nature of citizenship elevated the significance of the geographic source of an object. Both India and Pakistan settled on the principle of *jus soli*,[163] based on a person's birth within territorial boundaries, reiterating the primacy of one's connection with land, here transferred to objects.[164]

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[160] *Ibid.*
[161] Basta 54 9, Punjab State Archives, Patiala.
[162] Johnathan R. Gillis (ed.), *Commemorations*, p. 9.
[163] See Niraja Gopal Jayal, *Citizenship and its Discontents*; Joya Chatterji, 'South Asian Histories of Citizenship'.
[164] Indeed, objects have since acquired legal rights as 'juristic entities' following the famous case of a stolen Nataraja idol. Ramesh Chandran, 'Indian Government Wins Stolen Nataraja Idol Case

Understandably, then, Chopra was keen about a collection of paintings that originated from the Punjab region, providing both history and a connection with Punjab's geography, themes that will reappear in this thesis. But the difference in priorities between regional and national governments might have also been shaped by the audiences and participants of the respective disputes (domestic vs international), and 'which particular geographies — real and imaginary — were significant'[165] to the bureaucrats conducting these negotiations (regional vs national). This is another theme that will recur.

Supporting the idea that physical possession in a specific location mattered, during the Inter-Dominion Conference of December 1948, the West Punjab Government representatives stressed that they had 'no intention of holding back the exhibits which have fallen to the share of East Punjab'.[166] But due to 'feelings in West Punjab' which were 'rather strong on the subject of the Arbitral Tribunal Award in respect of the Museum exhibits…it is feared that if transfer of exhibits to East Punjab is unnecessarily hurried there may be ugly incidents at Lahore.'[167]

It may not be possible to dismiss this as one-sided scaremongering. While on tour to Delhi, G. L. Chopra received instructions to travel to Lahore to secure East Punjab's share of records. Whereas he was 'naturally very keen and anxious' to do so, he was also compelled to remind the Chief Secretary 'about the extremely unfriendly and even hostile relations which developed between the West Punjab experts' and himself leading up to the sealing of the Records Office at Anarkali's Tomb on 8 August 1947.[168]

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in British Court', *India Today,* 15 March 1988 [https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/international/story/19880315-indian-government-wins-stolen-nataraja-idol-case-in-british-court-797028-1988-03-15, accessed 31 January, 2019].

[165] Francesca Orsini, 'The Multilingual Local in World Literature', *Comparative Literature,* 67:4 (2015), p. 346.

[166] File 10-12/48 Pak (A), p. 19, National Archives of India.

[167] *Ibid.*

[168] 'Partition Material from the Civil Sectt Lahore', p. 17, Basta 70 30, Punjab State Archives, Patiala.

What worried him was,

> 'their expert Mohd Saidullah who had been my assistant for some years earlier had been harbouring a great deal of ill feeling towards me after quitting my office in 1944 and this was shown in ugly forms on the eve of the partition. He, I understand, is now the Keeper of the West Punjab Government and thus actually incharge [sic] of the Tomb. This raises in the minds of my people and myself a sense of risk and insecurity for the period when I would be actually working in the Tomb there. The situation thus requires a carefully thought out arrangement for the safety of my men and myself… through our Deputy High Commissioner in Lahore...'[169]

A year later, Saidullah complied with Chopra's research request for material on the Sikh court, with easy cooperation.[170] Was Chopra exaggerating his fears? If so, why? Why did Saidullah feel more inclined to cooperate then? A partial explanation might be that the violence of partition in the background of these negotiations, compounded by factors such as biased press coverage which tended to justify violence as 'self-defence', coloured the vision of most actors.[171] Given that Chopra's job required him to traverse bloodied lands and enter 'enemy' territory, it is understandable that he was wary.

As Saidullah's former boss, unresolved personal issues between him and Chopra — framed as religious animosity — could have also played a part. The subsequent cooperation might have been the result of a greater sense of security on Saidullah's part, perhaps engendered by the process of bureaucracy and diplomacy itself, contributing to the rebuilding of ties. It may also have had to do with the shift in the balance of power between them, making their relationship appear less hierarchical, more akin to the enabling environment of a network.

Despite evidence of anxiety and stress, therefore, the networks of archivists and archaeologists between East and West Punjab were as productive as those that finalised the division of antiquities loaned to the Royal Academy. Thus, at *both* the national *and*

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169 *Ibid.*

170 'Correspondence with Lahore Record Office 1949', Basta 54 89, Punjab State Archives, Patiala.

171 Ilyas Chattha has written of the biased press coverage of the Punjab partition, which sought to exonerate groups of violent behaviour, on the basis that it was for 'defence'. 'Partisan Reporting: Press Coverage of the 1947 Partition Violence in the Punjab', *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, 36:4 (2013), pp. 608-625.

regional levels, India and Pakistan achieved partition through old, established, and resilient networks, and articulated identity through cultural contest.

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II

MUSEUMS AND NATION-BUILDING

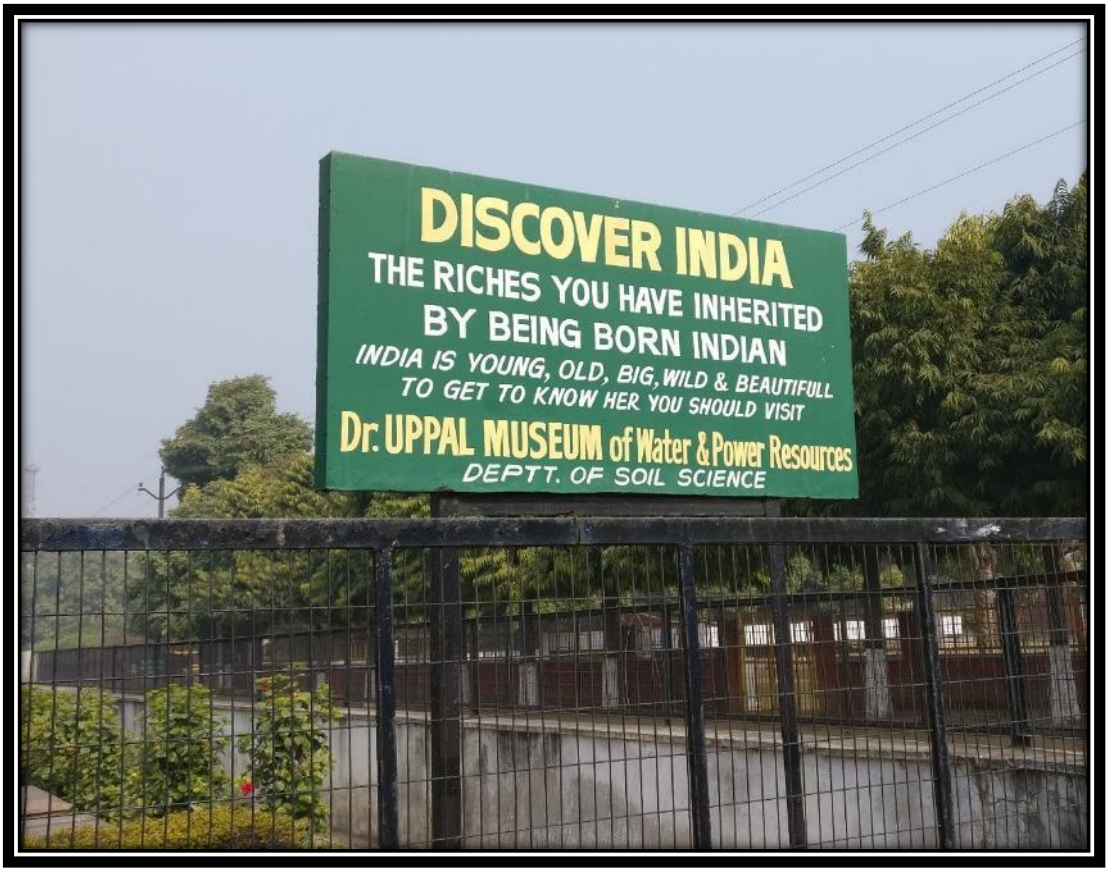

Fig 2.1: Outside the Dr Uppal Museum of Water and Power Resources of Northern India, on the campus of Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana.[1]

[1] Image: Author.

Introduction

Despite the massive challenges of reconstruction at the end of the Second World War, the desire to make a fresh start towards a new world order was widespread. In South Asia, there was the heady rush of independence too, if sobered by the violence of partition and the magnitude of the task of nation-building. Consigned 'to the waiting room of history' for decades if not centuries, newly independent countries like India and Pakistan proclaimed their readiness for democratic self-government and modernity in the European mould, with the advantage of being able to 'leap-frog' over the latter's mistakes.[2] Modernity was 'simplicity itself, a simple conflict between superstition and knowledge, error and science, in which, moreover, a benign history had arranged victory for science and truth in advance."[3]

Development — the poster child of modernity — took many forms. Scholars of India and Pakistan have highlighted the scale of government ambition;[4] the continuities in models and personnel from the colonial period;[5] and the tension caused by the gap

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[2] Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincialising Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), pp. 6-11.

[3] Sudipta Kaviraj, *The Imaginary Institution of India* (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2010), p.122. Eurocentric understandings of both modernity and democracy have since been disrupted, in both British-ruled and princely India. See Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincialising Europe*; Partha Chatterjee, *A Princely Impostor?: the Strange and Universal History of the Kumar of Bhawal* (Princeton; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Manu B. Bhagavan, *Sovereign Spheres: Princes, Education, and Empire in Colonial India* (Delhi; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Sudipta Kaviraj, 'Modernity and Politics in India', in *The Trajectories of the Indian State* (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2010), pp. 15-39; Dipesh Chakrabarty, 'The Muddle of Modernity', *The American Historical Review*, 116:3 (2011), pp. 663-675; Sheldon Pollock (ed.), *Forms of Knowledge in Early Modern Asia: Explorations in the Intellectual History of India and Tibet, 1500-1800* (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 2011); Janaki Nair, *Mysore Modern: Rethinking the Region under Princely Rule* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2011); Joya Chatterji, 'South Asian Histories of Citizenship, 1946-1970', *The Historical Journal,* 55:4 (2012), pp. 1049-1071; Eric L. Beverley, *Hyderabad, British India, and the World: Muslim Networks and Minor Sovereignty, c. 1850-1950* (Delhi; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); Joya Chatterji, 'Princes, Subjects, and Gandhi: Alternatives to Citizenship at the End of Empire' in *Partition's Legacies* (Ranikhet: Permanent Black/ Ashoka University, 2019), pp. 488-490.

[4] Daniel Haines, *Building the Empire, Building the Nation: Development, Legitimacy, and Hydro-Politics in Sind, 1919-1969* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Nikhil Menon, '"Fancy Calculating Machine": Computers and Planning in Independent India', *Modern Asian Studies,* 52: 2 (2018), pp. 421-457.

[5] Anjali Bhardwaj Datta, 'Genealogy of a Partition City: War, Migration and Urban Space in Delhi', *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies,* 42:1 (2019), pp. 152-169.

between dreams and reality.[6] The sheer number of people to be fed or educated juxtaposed with the paucity of resources necessitated creative solutions, including shifting the burden of implementation to citizens.[7] Yet, these remained times for optimism and experimentation, despite the uncertain outcomes.[8]

Albeit spoken of as a shared international goal, 'development' proved an opportunity for the rich nations of the Global North to continue — or in some cases establish — their control over the resource-rich economies of the poorer, aspiring, or recently decolonised Global South (subsumed within rhetoric about containing Communism). Markus Daechsel and others have discussed the emergence at this time of 'a footloose and cosmopolitan community of development consultants' and scientists, 'ranging from the celebrity expert staying only in five-star hotels and conferring directly with prime ministers and presidents, to humble craftsmen, doctors and engineers sent out on long-term assignments in far flung locations'.[9] Theirs was a cosmopolitanism that allowed 'imaginative affiliations in other geographic areas, in which formal institutional or political affiliation'[10] was not a prerequisite. It was also a community that absorbed and overlapped with pre-war, colonial networks of experts and bureaucrats.[11] Yet what was publicised (and perceived by donor governments) as a one-way flow of knowledge,

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[6] Taylor Sherman, 'From "Grow More Food" to "Miss a Meal": Hunger, Development and the Limits of Post-Colonial Nationalism in India, 1947-1957', *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies,* 36:4 (2013), pp. 571-588.
[7] Taylor Sherman, 'Education in Early Postcolonial India: Expansion, Experimentation and Planned Self-help', *History of Education*, 47:4 (2018), pp. 504-520.
[8] *Ibid.,* p. 504.
[9] Markus Daechsel, *Islamabad and the Politics of International Development in Pakistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 3; Robert S. Anderson, *Nucleus and Nation: Scientists, International Networks and Power in India* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016). On the transnational nature of decolonisation see Ruth Craggs and Claire Wintle (eds.), *Cultures of Decolonisation: Transnational Productions and Practices, 1945-70* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016).
[10] Iftikhar Dadi, *Modernism and the Art of Muslim South Asia* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010), p. 20.
[11] Joseph M. Hodge, *Triumph of the Expert: Agrarian Doctrines of Development and the Legacies of British Colonialism* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2007); Robert S. Anderson, *Nucleus and Nation*.

skills and assistance, was often in fact a more equal exchange of expertise amongst the senior bureaucrats and technocrats who led projects.[12]

Education was a core element in the Government of India's discourse on development and nation-building, although there was some disagreement on what this meant in practice. The comparatively minuscule investment in this area belied the rhetoric, as did the imbalance between primary and tertiary education when budget allocations *were* made.[13] Against the background of India and Pakistan's contest over objects of archaeological and artistic value in the quest to define themselves, this chapter interrogates the relationship between museums (the repositories of those objects) and nation-building in these countries. It does so through the lens of education and the post-War international museum movement. The latter foregrounded the role of museums as institutions of mass education from this time, despite the varied circumstances around the world under which they were established.

Museums also participated in other aspects of nation-building, as part of which they reflected the tensions inherent between nations and regions. They did so in collaboration with historians, archaeologists and museologists (in addition to bureaucrats and politicians), all of whom debated how to interpret material remains, and influenced (to a greater or lesser extent) national narratives. Often, these evolved in conversation with, or in contrast, to narratives across Indo-Pakistani borders. The actors were part of shared, transnational, cosmopolitan networks. This chapter analyses these under-studied networks, and through them, the links between India and Pakistan's material histories, and the ways in which they were deployed to construct national narratives. In doing so, it

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[12] Mark Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and Ideological Origins of the United Nations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009); David Walker, 'General Cariappa Encounters "White Australia": Australia, India and the Commonwealth in the 1950s', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 34:3 (2006), pp. 389-406; David Lowe, 'Journalists and the Stirring of Australian Public Diplomacy: The Colombo Plan Towards the 1960s', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 48:1 (2013), pp. 175-190; Marcus Daechsel, *Islamabad*; David Lowe, 'The Colombo Plan for Aid to South and Southeast Asia: Cultivating Habits of Diplomacy', paper presented at the Centre of South Asian Studies, University of Cambridge, 6 February 2019; Joseph Francome, personal communication, June 2019.

[13] Krishna Kumar, *Politics of Education in Colonial India* (New Delhi; London: Routledge, 2014), especially chapter VII 'The Meanings of Progress'; Krishna Kumar (ed.), *Routledge Handbook of Education in India: Debates, Practices, and Policies* (New Delhi: Routledge, 2017).

widens the scope of Joya Chatterji and others' argument that 'mutuality and cooperation'[14] characterised India and Pakistan's trajectories, undergirding it with greater theoretical sophistication.

Museums in South Asia: A Brief Overview

The museum as we know it in South Asia did, in fact, have European origins, typically as collections of 'curious' objects in cabinets. Today, we understand 'curious' to mean inquisitive or unusual; it used to mean 'made carefully' or with attention to detail.[15] The etymology is revealing and tells us what was being collected and why: intricate objects from around the world, to stoke the imagination and create wonder. It was a way of knowing the world, with an emphasis on the unknown, the unexplored, the other. For the owners of such objects, putting this knowledge on display demonstrated their reach, signalling wealth, power, influence, and authority. From these modest beginnings, museums widened their remit. They expanded from exclusive aristocratic preserves meant to impress select friends, or for respectable and paying members of the public, to the university: in theory, a more egalitarian space. By the nineteenth century, they had evolved into grand public educational projects; a way of teaching the rough but aspirational better skills, aesthetics, and morals.

The oldest official museum in India is the Indian Museum Kolkata, established in 1814. However, its core collections came from the Asiatic Society of Bengal, inaugurated thirty years before. The Society's original remit was to collect local manuscripts that would aid the burgeoning English East India Company to interpret and execute justice.

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[14] Joya Chatterji, 'An Alternative History of India-Pakistan Relations', lecture delivered at the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, London, 8 March 2012 [https://backdoorbroadcasting.net/2012/03/joya-chatterji-an-alternative-history-of-india-pakistan-relations/, accessed August 2019]; Pallavi Raghavan, 'The Finality of Partition: Bilateral Relations Between India and Pakistan, 1947-1957', PhD thesis, University of Cambridge (2012), recently published as Pallavi Raghavan, *Animosity at Bay: An Alternative History of the India- Pakistan Relationship, 1947-1952* (London: Hurst & Co., 2020).

[15] 'Curious', *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* [https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/curious, accessed 21 March 2017].

Its collecting mandate soon expanded, however, transforming it into the pre-eminent colonial knowledge-gathering enterprise in the subcontinent. As the British empire in India grew, and India moved from Company to Crown administration after the upheavals of 1857, museums became one of several mechanisms to know the empire better, as well as a repository of the knowledge Britain acquired and accrued about it.[16]

Economics drove much of this. The Indian subcontinent was vast, with natural resources that Britain was keen to exploit, that, in turn fuelled and funded the vibrant technological changes of the nineteenth century. Thus, museums collected and displayed natural history and resources, and objects of 'art manufacture' and 'Indian industry'. As an editorial article in *The Bombay Times and Journal of Commerce* noted:

> 'It may be laid down that the more we know of India, the more valuable it will become, and there is nothing that we can see more likely to conduce to this desirable acquaintance with this country and its resources than the general establishment of Museum.[sic]'[17]

Museums were also connected to the increasingly popular international exhibitions or world fairs, beginning with the 'Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations' of 1851. Often referred to as 'The Crystal Palace Exhibition' after the temporary structure erected in Hyde Park, London, to house it, it was an international trade fair and an opportunity to demonstrate Britain's control over its colonies to audiences at home and the rest of the world.[18] The control was both literal and figurative — Britain was able to pull off the technological and infrastructural feats necessary to coordinate, transport, house, and erect all that the exhibition involved; but it also decided how these places, people and their culture would be represented.[19] This was qualified:

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[16] Bernard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India* in Bernard Cohn, *The Bernard Cohn Omnibus* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004), especially Chapter IV, 'The Transformation of Objects into Artifacts, Antiquities, and Art in Nineteenth-Century India'.
[17] *The Bombay Times and Journal of Commerce*, 16 July 1845, Editorial Article 3, p. 466, cited in Sudeshna Guha, *Artefacts of History* (New Delhi: Sage, 2015), p. 85.
[18] This explanation of the rationale of the South Kensington model is widely known in the museum profession, although not perhaps to the general public.
[19] On ways of seeing, positioning, and consuming India, especially visually, see Saloni Mathur, *India by Design: Colonial History and Cultural Display* (Berkeley; London: University of California, 2007). For a study of power and its (disciplinary) methods of colonisation, see Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

there were challenges to and breakdowns of imperial order, which offer glimpses of agency and world-shaping by 'others',[20] but such exhibitions continued to project the overarching paradigm, even if it was contested.[21] 'All Nations' were present, but Carol Breckenridge demonstrates that while the exhibition transcended national boundaries to construct what she calls a Victorian 'ecumene', it nevertheless served to reify the nation-state.[22] The profits went towards a new museum — the South Kensington Museum (known today as the Victoria & Albert Museum) — and many of the exhibition highlights formed the core collection. But the exhibition did more than this. It reduced and equated entire cultures to a selection of 'representative' objects; organising, classifying, and presenting for consumption by melding existing notions of cabinets of curiosities, and display.

The South Kensington Museum was the most influential museum model of its time; indeed, it remains recognisable today. The essential connection was between the museum as a repository for artistic works, and as a space for teaching and learning. The intended audience included the general public for whom it was meant to provide quality intellectual stimulation. Moreover, by keeping the masses out of pubs and away from showgirls, it was also deemed to be morally improving.

Perhaps more important than the general public was the specialist artisan. In this instance, the museum did not merely seek to display, but also to train. At Bombay (as it was) and Lahore for example, the Sir J. J. and Mayo Schools of Art (respectively) ran alongside the Victoria & Albert Museum (now the Dr Bhau Daji Lad Mumbai City Museum) and the Lahore Museum, both local versions of the South Kensington Museum. Both the Company (later Government) and private individuals invested in these schemes and institutions, ostensibly to 'save' the dying 'art manufactures' of India. The idea, according to the model's advocates, was that the museum would show students

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[20] Jung H. Kim, 'Rethinking Vivekananda Through Space and Territorialised Spirituality, 1880-1920', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cambridge (2018), pp. 63-108, 153-194.
[21] Tony Bennett, 'The Exhibitionary Complex', *New Formations*, 4 (1988), pp. 73-102; Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum* (London: Routledge, 1995); Louise Purbrick (ed.), *The Great Exhibition of 1851: New Interdisciplinary Essays* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001).
[22] Carol A. Breckenridge, 'The Aesthetics and Politics of Colonial Collecting: India at World Fairs', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 31:2 (1989), pp. 195-216.

from hereditary artisan families the best examples of artistic production through the ages, and from various regions, in order to stimulate their creativity and imagination. Simultaneously, the art schools would impart 'modern' skills (drawing was emphasised) and train students in improved methods of production, thereby resulting in a better product.[23] Yet, as with any colonial 'investment' into India, this too had hidden dimensions (say, developing British art and design), and is a subject that retains scope for detailed enquiry.[24]

Some of India's princes outdid the colonial administration in both enthusiasm and accomplishment. Jaipur is a good example, where Maharaja Sawai Ram Singh II opened a School of Art in 1866 offering free tuition to boys from artisan families.[25] The nucleus of a State museum was established in 1876. It moved into the iconic Albert Hall in 1887 (it is still there, rechristened the Government Central Museum), with display cases of the 'S. K. M. pattern',[26] and was of a standard that Rudyard Kipling declared 'a rebuke to all other Museums in India from Calcutta downwards'.[27] It retained its collections and reputation well after independence, described in 1965 in an international museum journal as 'the largest and most advanced in respect of the reorganisation and reinstallation of its collections.' 'Museums', the article continued, 'are in a favourable position in Jaipur for, between them, the Government Central Museum and the Maharajah of Jaipur's Museum

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[23] Partha Mitter discusses the conflicting and confused agendas of art schools in India, which soon became academies for fine art training for the fee-paying middle classes, rather than free training in 'industrial art' for the artisanal class as originally envisaged. *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India, 1850-1922: Occidental Orientations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 29-62. For recent writing on the Mayo School of Art, see Tahir Kamran, 'Lockwood Kipling's Role and the Establishment of the Mayo School of Art', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 26:3 (2016), pp. 443-461. A further discussion on art schools is outside the scope of this thesis.

[24] See for example Maxine Berg, 'Useful Knowledge, "Industrial Enlightenment", and the Place of India', *Journal of Global History,* 8:1 (2013), pp. 117-141. Julius Bryant and Susan Weber (eds.) attempted a beginning in *John Lockwood Kipling: Arts & Crafts in the Punjab and London* (New York; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017) and the accompanying exhibition, but work remains to be done.

25 The Jaipur School of Art was more successful in sticking to the original idea, partly because Western-style drawing was omitted from the curriculum. Vibhuti Sachdev and Giles Tillotson, *Building Jaipur: The Making of an Indian City* (London: Reaktion Books, 2002), pp. 102-108; Giles Tillotson, 'The Jaipur Exhibition of 1883', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 14:2 (2004), pp. 111-126.

[26] Rudyard Kipling, *From Sea to Sea: Letters of Travel Part 1* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1907), p. 40.

[27] *Ibid.*

in the City Palace…offer a fairly complete report on the culture of this Rajput capital.'[28] The Jaipur Court had established *both* museums, at different points of time.[29]

Museums and connected art schools in the princely states were not mere copycat institutions.[30] Rather, they could upstage (and thus subvert) their colonial models in scope, efficiency, and quality of output. Jaipur State gained independent visibility by showcasing the best examples of its art and design at the Albert Hall Museum, and by strategically 'placing' the output from the Maharaja's College of Art (as diplomatic gifts and in industrial exhibitions).[31] As a consequence, it was able to position itself as *the* centre for artistic production, within India, the Empire, and the globe.[32]

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[28] Grace Morley, 'Museums in India', *Museum,* 18:6 (1965), pp. 234-235.

[29] Chapter III of this thesis offers some insights into the role of the princely museum in independent India.

[30] Including in their architecture. Whether Jaipur or Lahore, Carrie Anne LaPorte challenges the notion that museums were about empire alone, arguing for the primacy of the local as demonstrated in architecture, even when the museum in question was in British India. Carrie Anne LaPorte, 'Displaying Empire? The Architecture and Development of Museums in Nineteenth-century India', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Pennsylvania (2003). Also see Homi Bhabha, 'Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse' in *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 2004), pp. 121-131.

[31] Vibhuti Sachdev, 'Negotiating Modernity in the Princely State of Jaipur', *South Asian Studies*, 28:2 (2012), pp. 171-181. Although claiming to correct oversights by Sachdev and Tillotson in *Building Jaipur* and elsewhere, Sugata Ray further illustrates the same argument in 'Colonial Frames, "Native" Claims: The Jaipur Economic and Industrial Museum', *Art Bulletin*, 96:2 (2014), pp. 196-21.

[32] In addition to the scholarly work previously cited on Jaipur, this argument draws on my work with colleagues on the collections of the Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum at the City Palace, Jaipur, since 2011.

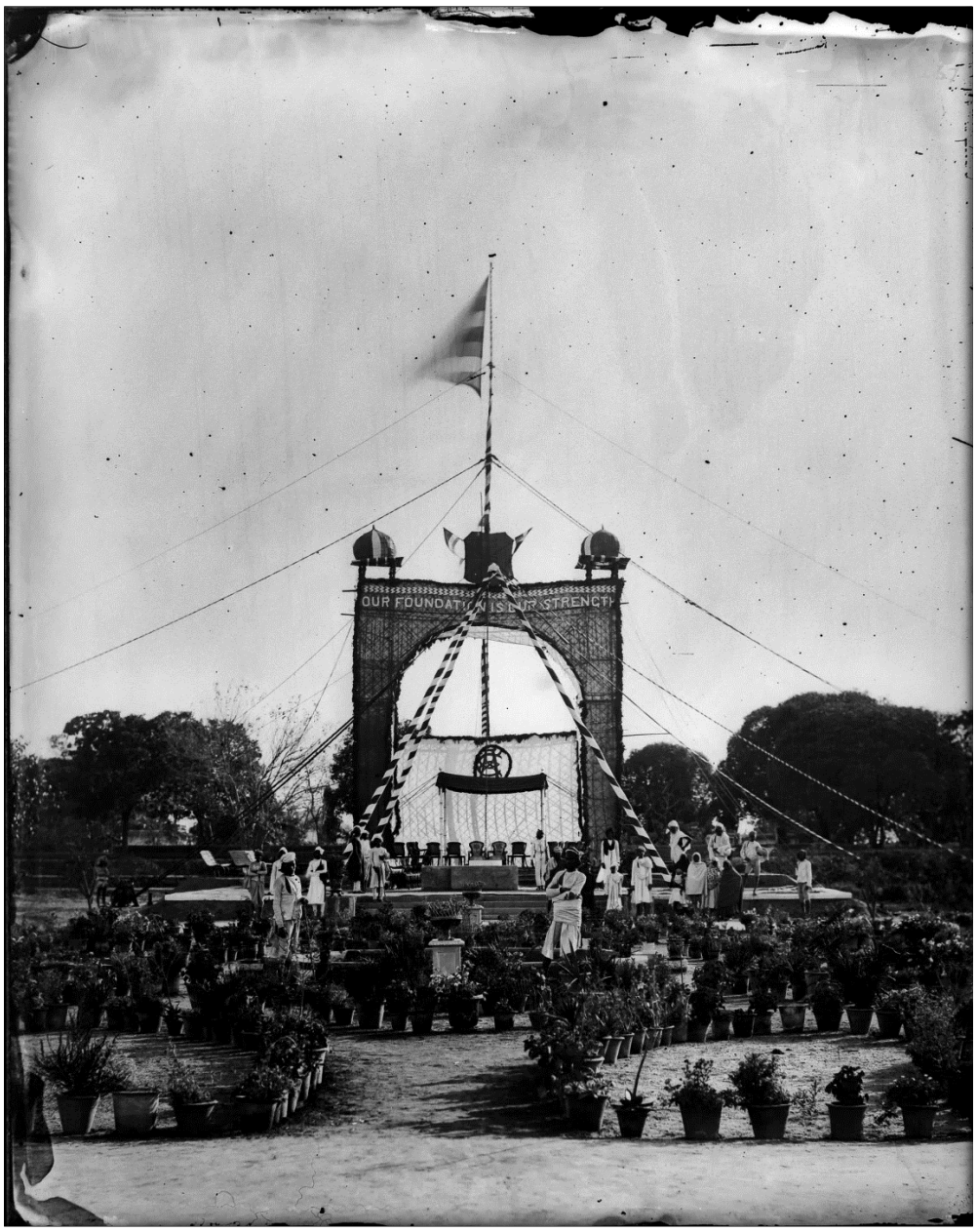

Fig 2.2: The foundation ceremony of the Albert Hall, timed for the visit of Albert Edward, Prince of Wales in 1876 as part of his grand tour of India. The Durbar did not have a clear idea for the building's function at this time, but subsequently decided to make it the home of the Jaipur State Museum.[33]

[33] Vibhuti Sachdev and Giles Tillotson, *Building Jaipur,* pp. 102-103; Image: © The Trustees of the Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum. From the Sawai Ram Singh II Archive, Acc no. 2012.04.0013-0021. Reproduced with permission.

Fig 2.3: The Albert Hall c. 1904-1915. Photograph by Gobindram Oodeyram Artists, Jaipur.[34]

[34] Image: © San Diego Museum of Man/ 2015.003 H. K. Raymenton Collection [www.flickr.com, accessed 27 April 2020], border cropped [https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/2.0/].

Shaila Bhatti's 'counterhistory of South Asian museology'[35] offers a different reading. She studies how the museum (in her case, the Lahore Museum) *does* in fact operate and how its visitors relate to it, rather than measuring it against an idealised yardstick modelled on Euro-American concepts that are themselves questionable. She resuscitates the discredited model of '*ajaibghar*' (or wonder house), suggesting that for the museum to have any relevance in South Asia, we must embrace something with local roots and resonance: the '*nokta nazar*' or subjective point of view of audiences. She challenges the prevailing model in which 'cognitive scientific classification' seeks to 'control wonder'.[36]

I agree, but with the proviso that this framework may not be *exclusive* to South Asian postcolonial museum consumption. If, as Arjun Appadurai and Carol Breckenridge argue, 'global museum impulses…crosscut a particular colonial and postcolonial trajectory'[37] in India, then it would be productive to compare India with other post-colonies, including the perspective of colonised indigenous groups such as within North America; not to forget India's own indigenous communities. The increasing multi-ethnicity of urban centres also complicates the nature of viewership, the museum experience, and museum practice. It is also necessary to be alert to the diverse modes and contexts for consuming museums *within* India, which forms the focal point for the following chapters.[38]

Thus, although museums had an embedded pedagogical function at an early date (both in the world and South Asia), India inherited an institution with motivations and rationale born of South Asian particularities. The educational mandate was to 'revive' atrophying traditions to improve livelihoods and design; and to 'preserve' India's historic objects as the relics of a dead past, thereby validating the colonial regime's place as

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[35] Shaila Bhatti, *Translating Museums: A Counterhistory of South Asian Museology* (London; New York: Routledge, 2012).
[36] *Ibid.,* pp. 191-192.
[37] Arjun Appadurai and Carol A. Breckenridge, 'Museums are Good to Think: Heritage on View in India' in *no touching, no spitting, no praying: The Museum in South Asia* ed. by Saloni Mathur and Kavita Singh (New Delhi: Routledge, 2015), pp. 173-184.
[38] See Ann Murphy, *The Materiality of the Past: History and Representation in Sikh Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), especially pp. 255-267 on the 'Afterlife of the Object' regarding Sikh modes of museumization. I draw on her work in subsequent chapters.

successor. What changed after independence? How did it relate to the international museum movement, and the issues of the mid-twentieth century? These are the broad questions that underlie this thesis.

Furthermore, within the small field of postcolonial South Asian museums, we know even less about what happened to the princely-state museum. Did it transform or survive after independence, and if so, how? What was their capacity for subverting other models? In the next chapter I offer some insights into a fascinating field that awaits further exploration. But for the moment I focus on how, within South Asia, the Indian and Pakistani museum professions articulated their respective histories; and determined the rationale, motivations, and mandates for their museums, within the framework of 'education'.

Postcolonial Education, Citizenship, and Museums

Educational ideals derive from a time and a place; they are rooted in historical context.[39] At independence, the Government of India positioned 'education' as a key development goal, occasioned by the very nature of that government: it was democratic and required the largely non-literate electorate to be able to participate. Challenging colonial wisdom on the subject, India had opted for universal adult suffrage regardless of the electorate's low literacy levels; 'a national gesture of abolishing the imaginary waiting room in which Indians had been placed by European historicist thought'.[40] Yet, in 'a strange homonymy between colonial and anti-colonial discourses on education',[41] there was (and remains) a strong sense that the peasant requires education to become a true citizen. As Edward Vickers and Krishna Kumar observe:

> 'Whatever form it takes, instruction in literacy is central to the role of schooling in inculcating the commitment and loyalty that nation-states demand from their

[39] K. Mannheim and W. A. C. Stewart, *An Introduction to the Sociology of Education* (London: Routledge/ Kegan Paul, 1962), p. 39 cited in *Politics of Education in Colonial India*, p. 13.
[40] Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincialising Europe*, p. 10; Ornit Shani, *How India Became Democratic: Citizenship and the Making of the Universal Franchise* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018).
[41] Krishna Kumar, *Politics of Education in Colonial India*, p. 14.

> citizenry, as well as the skills required for participation in civic and economic life. Hence post-War redrawings of territorial maps or post-revolutionary political and social upheavals are typically followed by the deployment of "weapons of mass instruction",[42] designed to socialise the young into new forms of identity — through the teaching of a standardized national language, history or an explicit ideology (religious or political). Modern educational systems, like other institutions of the modern state, have thus always functioned as technologies of social control, with notions of 'citizenship' among their chief instruments.'[43]

The use of education (especially the school curriculum) for nationalist propaganda and the schooling of citizens is well documented, as is the role of the state in the production and supply of 'official' textbooks.[44] But until now, the role of museums in achieving this in conjunction with the 'development goal' of education (encompassing literacy, numeracy, and the socialising forms of knowledge that Kumar and Vickers allude to) remains unexplored. This is notwithstanding Peggy Levitt's insight that:

> 'museums' social power extends far beyond their buildings. They each play some part in influencing how we envisage and talk about our nations and their place in the world — and the images and vocabulary we use to do so — even among people who never come inside. Museums, therefore, cannot help but be part of the creation of citizens.'[45]

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[42] J. T. Gatto *Weapons of Mass Instruction: A Schoolteacher's Journey Through the Dark World of Compulsory Schooling* (Gabriola Island: New Society Publishers, 2009) cited in *Constructing Modern Asian Citizenship* ed. by Edward Vickers and Krishna Kumar (London: Routledge, 2014), p. 15.
[43] Edward Vickers and Krishna Kumar (eds.), *Constructing Modern Asian Citizenship*, p. 15.
[44] In addition to Krishna Kumar on India, for a sample, see Rubina Saigol, 'Enemies Within and Enemies Without: The Besieged Self in Pakistani Textbooks', *Futures* 37:9 (2005), pp. 1005-1035; Marie Lall, 'Educate to Hate: The Use of Education in the Creation of Antagonistic National Identities in India and Pakistan', *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education,* 38:1 (2008), pp. 103-119; Sylvie Guichard, *The Construction of History and Nationalism in India: Textbooks, Controversies and Politics* (London; New York: Routledge, 2010); Shreya Ghosh, 'Activating Citizenship — The Nation's Use of Education to Create Notions of Identity and Citizenship in South Asia', *International Journal of Progressive Education,* 8:3 (2012), pp. 128-139. A cross-border initiative called 'Partitioned Histories: The Other Side of Your Story' (www.thehistory-project.org, accessed February 2017) juxtaposes contrasting versions of subcontinental history taught through official school textbooks in India and Pakistan, to challenge this practice and initiate dialogue amongst students.
[45] Peggy Levitt, *Artifacts and Allegiances: How Museums Put the Nation and the World on Display* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015), p. 140.

Even as politics drew postcolonial museums into citizen-making and nation-building, they (along with peers around the world) acquired mandates for building international understanding after the Second World War, in conjunction with the objectives of the United Nations Organisation. Scholars analysing its history and underlying motives have demonstrated that the UNO was old wine in a new bottle, with an imperialist agenda to maintain European (and increasingly American) political, or at least economic, control over the world. These goals were challenged and subverted over time, in part through the process of decolonisation which served to reinforce the national sovereignty of all member states.[46]

However, they retain their relevance for any examination of the United Nations' Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation or UNESCO during this era. Tasked with the intellectual and moral reconstruction of 'a world in ruins', it sought to educate the "peoples of the world" in order to bridge the "seas of misunderstanding" that separated them.[47] As its Preamble noted, "'since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed'".[48] So UNESCO encouraged nations to collaborate 'through education, science, culture and communication in order to further universal respect for justice, the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms set out in the Charter of the United Nations.'[49] In many cases, as in India, the 'peoples' in question had just experienced decolonisation and were exercising power through democratically elected governments. Therefore, the need for education was two-fold: to promote nation-building, as well as peace and democracy within a new global order.[50]

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[46] Mark Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace*; Lynn Meskell, *A Future in Ruins: UNESCO, World Heritage, and the Dream of Peace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018). Also see Rakesh Ankit, 'In the Twilight of Empire: Two Impressions of Britain and India at the United Nations, 1945-47', *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, 38:4 (2015), pp. 574-588.
[47] Lynn Meskell, *A Future in Ruins*, p. xv.
[48] *Ibid.* The Constitution has been updated to include women as per the current website. 'UNESCO in Brief — Mission and Mandate', UNESCO Website [https://en.unesco.org/about-us/introducing-unesco, accessed July 2020].
[49] Lynn Meskell, *A Future in Ruins*, p. xv.
[50] *Ibid.,* p. 1.

UNESCO was shot through with the same biases as its parent organisation and other post-War institutions of its time.[51] Its remit expanded fast: from reconstructing war-ravaged Europe to developing, disseminating and arbitrating 'global standards for education, science and cultural activities'.[52] Being a world body, at least on paper, shouldering this responsibility would appear apposite. But in the light of its own history, it is unsurprising that scholars of development and internationalism regard it as an extension of Europe's 'civilising mission'.

Within the realm of culture, it was not just that historic buildings and sites required rehabilitation or that art required rescue. Having set itself a mandate for world peace, 'it was the regulation of the past itself, and how it might be recovered' that was at stake — say, by determining how to conduct archaeological excavations or distribute finds — usually to the advantage of Western countries. Museums make a nation's history and cultural credentials tangible; they were thus ideal vehicles for UNESCO's dual goals of promoting international peace through inter-cultural understanding, and the regulation and recovery of the past in order to 'manage it for the future'.[53]

Museums acquired a standardised international definition through the 1946 Constitution of the International Council of Museums (ICOM):

> 'The word "museums" includes all collections open to the public, of artistic, technical, scientific, historical or archaeological material, including zoos and botanical gardens, but excluding libraries, except in so far as they maintain permanent exhibition rooms.'[54]

It is striking that artistic material headed the list of items that ICOM thought museums should hold. In November 1961, the list changed to 'collections of objects of

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[51] For instance, see Geoffrey R. D. Underhill, 'Bretton Woods' in *A Concise Oxford Dictionary of Politics and International Relations* ed. by Garett Wallace Brown, Iain McLean, Alistair McMillan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018, 4th edn. www.oxfordreference.com, accessed September 2019).

[52] Lynn Meskell, *A Future in Ruins*, p. xvi.

[53] *Ibid.,* p. xvii.

[54] As we shall see, archives maintained 'historical museums', so this definition contextualises much of the following chapters, which discuss collecting for Indian Punjab. 'Development of the Museum Definition According to ICOM Statutes (2007-1946)', ICOM Archives [http://archives.icom.museum/hist_def_eng.html, accessed 4 October 2018].

cultural or scientific significance'.[55] Thereafter, with increasing calls for UNESCO to address its biases (it has comparatively fewer non-European and North American sites in its flagship World Heritage programme for example, and, until recently, the criteria used to judge something worthy of inclusion skewed towards Euro-American conceptions of cultural heritage, i.e. buildings and collections), ICOM voted to amend the formula a further five times to make itself more and more inclusive (in 1974, 1989, 1995, 2001 and 2007[56]), until it encompassed 'the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment'.[57]

Museum, UNESCO's journal for the profession, reflects the predispositions of the period, notwithstanding its noble objective of providing a platform for exchange and creating a sense of the museum fraternity. Its Euro-American perspective, politics, and models served to perpetuate ex-colonial ways of thinking about, and organising, cultural heritage around the globe. It also encapsulated prevalent attitudes: both the profession and the institution saw themselves as authoritative and didactic, and their public in dire need of education.

Nevertheless, the journal throws fascinating light on shifting global priorities for museums from 1948 (when it began publication) until 1970 (the end date of this study). Within those priorities lay an opportunity for former colonies like India to assert their equality with their former imperial rulers; to 'catch up' with and preferably 'overtake' them, in keeping with the mood of the times. South Asians did not believe that the global agenda was irrelevant to them. Britain, Europe, and North America presented a yardstick for modernity that Indian professionals measured themselves against (inevitable given the nature of the modernist project and the hangover of colonialism). This context provides a baseline against which to evaluate South Asia's engagement with museums.

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[55] *Ibid.*

[56] A new, pre-circulated definition came up for a vote at ICOM's 25th General Assembly in Kyoto in September 2019. In an unprecedented move, the vote was deferred, due to disagreements over procedure and confusion over the wording. Vincent Noce, 'Vote on ICOM's New Museum Definition Postponed', *theartnewspaper.com*, 19 September 2019 [https://www.theartnewspaper.com/news/icom-kyoto, accessed 22 October 2019].

[57] 'Development of the Museum Definition'.

Museum reveals how often India made the news in the museum world, and when it did, why. It also allows for productive comparisons with Pakistan.

Mass Education and the International Museum Movement

The first issues of *Museum* in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War focussed on stock-taking. They documented the damage to museums, discussed reconstruction, advised on how to set up new displays, and improve display and signage techniques.[58] Soon thereafter, the many connected pushes for education, development and democracy, meant that education was pushed up the priority list for museums. *Museum*'s articles mirrored this global trend.

The main reason for museums being re-imagined as mass educational institutions was the visual nature of objects: one might be unlettered but could still learn by looking at them and being told about them.[59] This was of special value in the South Asian context, given low literacy levels. It provided a way to turn the masses into citizens through displays on a host of subjects complementary to the formal school system. For instance, an exhibition on dams and hydropower not only explained these concepts, but by using geographical scale models (such as at the Soils Museums or the Dr Uppal Museum of Water, Land and Power Resources of North Western India, both at Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana, whose remit includes educating farmers), it could conjure up the nation (or a portion of it) for its audience.[60] For its part, the government, rather than investing significant sums in primary, secondary, or tertiary institutions with

[58] *Museum*, 2:2 (1949).
[59] Museums have since moved on to recognise the limiting nature of a sight-based approach to sharing collections. See the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) [https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/the-convention-in-brief.html, accessed 13 December 2019]; the ICOM Cultural Diversity Charter (2010) [https://icom.museum, accessed 13 December 2019].
[60] 'Mr Azad Outlines Education Plans', *The Times of India,* 20 February 1947 (ProQuest Historical Newspapers, accessed 22 May 2017).

consistency, was able to legitimately shift the larger, conceptual burden of education as a whole onto museums, retaining for itself a limited focus on literacy and numeracy.

UNESCO's General Conference adopted resolutions on the need for temporary and circulating exhibitions to increase museums' educational reach in both 1949 and 1950,[61] and *Museum* dedicated a volume to the subject in 1950.[62] Art as a means to world understanding was the guiding philosophy behind both, and the theme of an exhibition organised to coincide with the Second National Conference of the United States' National Commission for UNESCO.[63]

The first two international seminars about museums and education took place in quick succession: the first in Brooklyn in 1952;[64] the second in Athens in 1954. They aimed to compare notes on what today is referred to as 'best practice', and generate recommendations for the field that could be applied across countries. It reiterated the idea that expertise and knowledge flowed from West to East and that the West was the natural innovator.

American museums believed themselves to be exemplars since they had imported collections from around the world in order to educate (non-native) Americans — a migrant people — about their own cultural heritage.[65] The advantages of the 'national type' of museum versus the American agglomerations was thus integral to the debate.[66] The former was a good showcase to foreign visitors and contributed to nation-building, but it had the potential to make its public more inward looking. On the other hand, the 'universal' museums of America and Europe could present the whole world (or at least a large part of it) to their visitors, fostering a less isolationist and more cosmopolitan outlook.

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[61] 'Foreword', *Museum,* 4:1 (1951), p. 2.
[62] *Museum*, 3:4 (1950).
[63] 'Art — A means to World Understanding', *Museum,* 5:2 (1952), p. 133.
[64] *Museum,* 6:4 (1953).
[65] Indigenous histories and First Nations are not considered.
[66] Grace Morley, 'Introduction', *Museum,* 8:4 (1955), pp. 201-227.

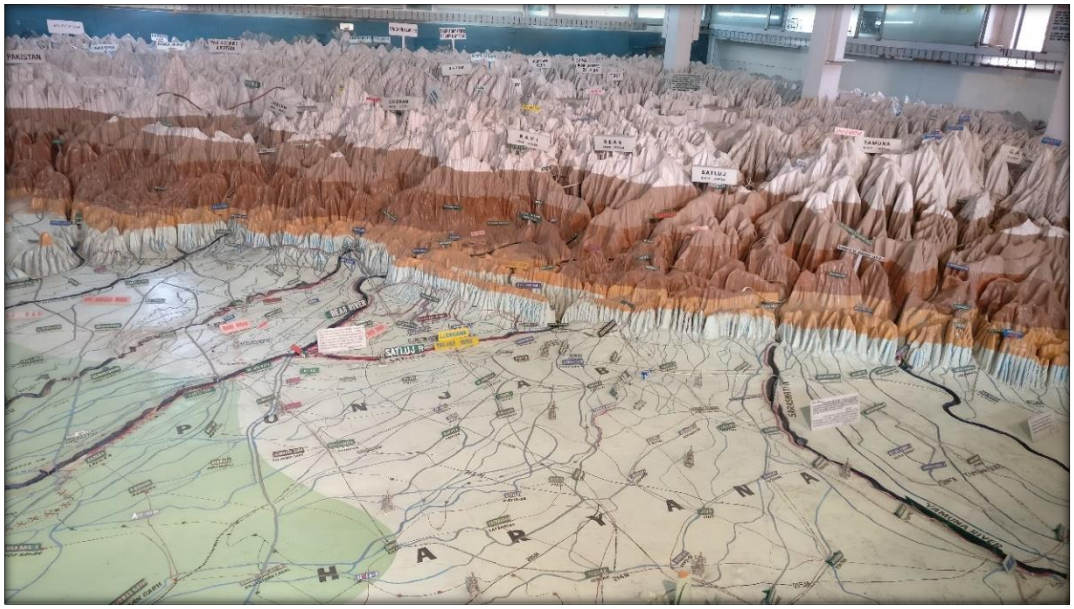

Fig 2.4: The interior of the Dr Uppal Museum is a diorama of the natural water and power resources of Northern India. A platform allows visitors to walk around it (the surface is just visible at the top of the image). M. S. Randhawa, who was Vice Chancellor of Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana, provided the support needed to realise the Museum. The University Library is named after Randhawa, who will emerge as a key figure in this thesis.[67]

[67] Image: Author.

Fig 2.5: A 'panoramic view of the landscape from the Himalayas to the Thar desert' at the Soils Museum founded by M. S. Randhawa at the Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana.[68]

[68] Image: Author.

Eventually, if one went to enough museums in different countries (the argument went), it could also teach shared cosmopolitan skills and competencies, as much as shared ideas and values: so not just shared ideas of the world but common tools with which to read and understand it. The post-War impetus for this kind of reasoning and preference for the 'universal' museum is understandable.

Of course, the nation and the world are interdependent, and museums and their objects have always been interconnected beyond national borders. Peggy Levitt suggests that museums operate on a 'cosmopolitan-nationalist continuum', which allows global stories to be refracted through national lenses with a greater or lesser emphasis on the nation.[69] Such an understanding makes the entire impassioned debate about national-vs-universal museums redundant; with the proviso that the point at which a museum positions itself on that continuum (which might change over time) constitutes a political choice and a statement.

In South Asia, postcolonial, national, and regional factors all shaped notions of identity. The question of how the national related to the global, and the way South Asian museums conceived of themselves and their mandate on the 'cosmopolitan-nationalist continuum' are recurring themes in this thesis. However, none of this took place in a vacuum. Post-war and international concerns were also relevant in shaping what kind of museums India or Pakistan should have, as the following will show.

Pakistan attended both museum education seminars in 1952 and 1954. There was no sign of India on the list of attendees,[70] despite India having signed UNESCO's founding charter in 1946.[71] Despite this, when asked for statistical information on Indian Museums in 1948, the official response was to declare a 'deep interest' in 'the United Nations and its Specialised agencies, particularly the UNESCO' on the part of both the 'Government and people of India', whose 'ancient tradition' (among other things) mandated India's 'vital' interest in preserving world peace.[72] The statement evoked

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[69] Peggy Levitt, *Artifacts and Allegiances*, p. 135.
[70] At least, as per *Museum*.
[71] 'India and the United Nations', Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India [https://mea.gov.in/india-and-the-united-nations.htm, accessed 6 September 2019]
[72] 'Museums — Collection of Statistical Information for UNESCO', Iljas-i-khas, p. 9, Punjab State Archives, Patiala.

superiority for India as the land which produced the Buddhist philosophy of peace, centuries before Europe had come up with UNESCO. The Buddhist symbol of the 'dharmachakra' for the national flag and the lion capital of Emperor Ashoka (a convert to Buddhism) as the state emblem were deliberate neutral choices.[73] They sidestepped the poisonous contest between Hindu and Muslim identities for India, which had resulted in its violent partition.

Buddhism's peace-loving and inclusive legacy as a source for India's identity and its international image spilled into other arenas too, such as architecture and the arts. In architecture, although a modernist style won out in time (the prime example was Chandigarh, of which more later), the 1950s was a decade of some experimentation, when architects tapped different sources for a modern Indian identity. Buddhism was one; the other was the syncretic Mughal court under Akbar. The experiments are encapsulated by two state-led building projects in New Delhi in the mid-1950s: Vigyan Bhavan (an international conference venue) in a revivalist Buddhist style, and the Ashoka Hotel (an international hotel where foreign state guests are still lodged) in a revivalist Mughal style (although the name Ashoka references Buddhism). Taken together, they 'show us one of the core problems of postcoloniality',[74] namely, the vexed question of how to articulate one's history, and what aspect of it to highlight. The example above demonstrates this problem in architecture, but it is common to the allied discipline of art history: which of India's many arts (and their regions) ought the postcolonial nation to foreground, and why?[75]

The official response to UNESCO's request for information on India's museums declared that India stood:

> 'for the diversion of world resources from armaments and war to constructive purposes and the provision of minimum civilised living conditions to the vast

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[73] Rebecca M. Brown, 'Reviving the Past', *Interventions*, 11:3 (2009), p. 298.
[74] Rebecca M. Brown, 'Reviving the Past', p. 297.
[75] For a discussion on Mughal art in Indian painting, see Devika Singh, 'Indian Nationalist Art History and the Writing and Exhibiting of Mughal Art, 1910-48', *Art History,* 36:5 (2013), pp. 1042-1069. Later in this chapter, I discuss interpretations of South Asia's Buddhist heritage through its museums, especially when juxtaposed with Islamic and Hindu counterparts. The role of painting in constructing identity features in the final chapter.

> masses of people who continue to be steeped in poverty and ignorance, despite the remarkable progress made by modern science and technology in the world.'[76]

It was a contradictory statement to make for a nation that had resolved to enfranchise those very same ignorant 'masses', many of whom were its citizens. It hints at the conflicts that can underlie national sentiments: a classic case of India's historicized view of 'the masses' as anachronistic 'peasants' in need of education, to be modernised out of their poverty and ignorance into productive citizens (world citizens in the UNESCO context). This way of seeing meant that India had bought into the idea of its own underdevelopment,[77] pushing it to embrace a range of European-led projects (as they appeared to be) from modernity to world peace, despite its claim to superior credentials as a land of peace and tolerance.[78]

UNESCO's international seminars represented significant commitments of time and money for all concerned. The General Conference of Member States chose topics by consensus and the selected subject was usually studied for a month, with facilities and support services provided by the Member State which had offered to host the seminar.[79] There was also an important, and consciously articulated, 'human side'. The seminars were 'an exercise in international living', benefitting participants not only through professional and informational exchange, but also because they learnt:

> 'to know one another as colleagues and individuals, and to overcome differences in language, in experience, in patterns of thought. Rare are the isolationists in language or thought who can long entirely resist sharing in such a group, contributing to it and benefiting from their participation in it.'[80]

As a result (or so the belief went), everyone learnt 'a great deal of the technique of international effort' and to 'become more effective instruments of international co-operation, more useful citizens of our world,' people who could, 'in their particular

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[76] 'Collection of Statistical Information for UNESCO', p. 9.
[77] Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincialising Europe*, p. 10; Taylor Sherman, 'From "Grow More Food" to "Miss a Meal"', pp. 571-572.
[78] For example, Rajni Kothari, *Politics in India* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1970 [1982 reprint]).
[79] Grace Morley, 'Introduction', fn. 1, p. 210.
[80] *Ibid.,* p. 209-210.

spheres, contribute to the spreading of that same co-operative spirit among their peoples and their peoples' governments.'[81]

Museums thus reinvented themselves in response to global changes and challenges. The institution had been co-opted into the post-War agenda. No longer did governments and policymakers around the world see them as repositories of objects for scholars alone to study, or artisans to train from, but as active agents of development through education. Levitt has pointed out that specific historic and cultural factors influence how museums "think" and "do" the nation or national identity; and 'what role museums play in that "thinking"" and "doing" is always changing'.[82] The following sections consider how the specificities of South Asia shaped what its museums 'thought' and 'did' in the postcolonial era.

Museums at Work in Pakistan

Mortimer Wheeler was consistent. His inaugural address at the first All Pakistan Museums Conference in 1949 echoed his memos as Director General of Archaeology in India, which emphasised that 'a nation which is actively and intelligently conscious of its present must also be conscious of its past.'[83] He set out the educational role, indeed obligations, of a modern museum, which he saw as 'a popular university' that could *teach* 'the people of a province or a nation to appreciate their own traditions and to understand more fully their own nationhood.'[84] Not only that; museums also presented to 'the world

[81] *Ibid.,* p. 238.
[82] Peggy Levitt, *Artifacts and Allegiances*, p. 135. For an example of this changing over time, see Alissandra Cummins, 'Caribbean Museums and National Identity', *The History Workshop Journal,* 58 (2004), pp. 224-245.
[83] R. E. M. Wheeler, 'Our Task', *Proceedings of the Museums Association of Pakistan, First Session, April 1949* (Peshawar: Government Printing and Stationery NWFP, 1949), p. 1. Wheeler's speech was published with a note that he spoke extempore. However, the sentiments are in keeping with his contemporary writings and speeches. Also, the speech as printed was what circulated. See Chapter VI of this thesis on the circulation of journals and the public sphere.
[84] *Ibid.,* pp. 1, 6, 7.

at large' a snapshot of 'local or national achievement'.[85] Although Pakistan was late to the game and had far to go, he was encouraged by — and encouraging of — his audience perceiving the need. Compliment delivered, he hammered home the urgency of the situation:

> 'In a real sense, the quality of a nation's museums to-day is an index of that nation's vitality and value in all walks of life. To put the matter at the lowest level, Pakistan cannot afford to-day to be *without* an efficient and active museum-service.'[86]

Wheeler's exhortations wove together the museum's different strands of operation in postcolonial South Asia: a way to learn history through objects (the 'props' that made it 'real'[87]); an explicit mandate to build a sense of nationhood for both domestic and international consumption; and as a purveyor of mass education, a harbinger of modernity.

Reiterating the long-standing primacy accorded to art and archaeology collections, he stressed that 'it is in those spheres that Pakistan's contribution to human endeavour is unique' emphasising the need for 'cultural values in this disturbed age' of the post-War world.[88] He also commended the needs of the present and future to his colleagues, namely, the sciences and industry.[89] He only made one allusion to the recent partition, right at the end of the speech, commenting on the 'delicate aspect' of museum work, which mandated that 'as custodians of a considerable part of the nation's material achievement in the past', his colleagues must not give in to 'communal exclusiveness' and 'biases'.[90]

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[85] *Ibid.*
[86] *Ibid.* Emphasis in the original.
[87] Simon J. Knell, Peter Aronsson, Anne B. Amundsen, Amy J. Barnes, Stuart Burch, Jennifer Carter, Vivianne Gosselin, Sarah A. Hughes, Alan Kirwan (eds.), *National Museums: New Studies from Around the World* (London; New York: Routledge, 2011), p. 4; Ivan Karp, 'Introduction' and Carol Duncan 'Art Museums and the Ritual of Citizenship' in *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display* ed. by Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine (Washington, D. C.; London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), pp. 1-18, 83-103.
[88] R. E. M. Wheeler, 'Our Task', pp. 1, 6, 7.
[89] *Ibid.,* pp. 1, 6, 7.
[90] *Ibid.,* p. 8.

The inaugural meeting of the Museums Association of Pakistan began with recitation from the Holy Quran by Sahibzada Haji Fazal-i-Samdani.

Dr. R. E. Mortimer Wheeler, M. A., C. I. E., M. C., Archaeological Adviser, Government of Pakistan, reading his inaugural address.

Fig 2.6: Inaugural session of the Museums Association of Pakistan, which began with a recitation of the Quran by Shahibzada Fazal-i-Samdani. Mortimer Wheeler in a dark suit is visible in both images despite their grainy quality, delivering the inaugural address.[91]

[91] Image: *Proceedings of the Museums Association of Pakistan, First Session, April 1949*, unnumbered insert. Courtesy Archaeological Library, Lahore Fort.

A few lines later, Wheeler 'pointed out the presence of Dr N. P. Chakravarti, Director-General of Archaeology in India, and thanked the Government of India for sending him to participate in the deliberation of the Conference', as a gesture of 'goodwill'.[92] For his part, Chakravarti offered his hope that the two Museums associations — Pakistan the baby sister to India's, a few years older — would 'grow up together'.[93]

These opening comments reflect the double-edged quality of the United Nations' mandate, and the politics of the time. On the one hand it provided a platform for the world's nations to reach across their boundaries, encouraging them to act in concert. On the other, its emphasis on national sovereignty — and Wheeler's on the 'national' role of museums — served to reify nationalism. They also reveal that the anxiety to be modern and scientific that inflected the debates within the profession was a shared, 'glocal' one; even as South Asian museum professionals remained undecided about their place in local contests between communities.

N. P. Chakravarti's presence along with Wheeler's, points to the possibilities for cooperation between India and Pakistan that existed in the early years after independence, and the potential and resilience inherent in the transnational networks outlined in Chapter I. Cooperation was a key, and oft-neglected feature of relations between India and Pakistan in their formative years. As Pallavi Raghavan has shown,[94] far from being a solely antagonistic relationship, the two countries not only managed to conduct successful bilateral negotiations on a score of subjects connected with partition, but *sought out* opportunities to do so, in order to finalise the split and assert their independence and sovereignty. Furthermore, the very process of negotiation shaped their conceptions of many aspects of sovereignty and citizenship — it was a shared experience of learning by doing, and on the job.

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92 R. E. M. Wheeler, 'Our Task', p. 8.
93 *Proceedings of the Museums Association of Pakistan, First Session, April 1949*, p. 25.
94 Pallavi Raghavan, 'Finality of Partition: Bilateral Relations Between India and Pakistan, 1947-1957', PhD thesis, University of Cambridge (2012) recently published as Pallavi Raghavan, *Animosity at Bay: An Alternative History of the India–Pakistan Relationship, 1947-1952* (London: Hurst & Co., 2020); Pallavi Raghavan, 'The Making of the India-Pakistan Dynamic: Nehru, Liaqat, and the No War Pact Correspondence of 1950', *Modern Asian Studies*, 50:5 (2016), pp. 1645-1678.

The negotiations over archaeological material and museum collections in the previous chapter must be understood in this light. In other words, India and Pakistan's assertion of ownership over historic objects was a performance of their sovereignty, and forced them to recognise each other's. Witnessed by an international (Britain and the Commonwealth) *and* domestic audience, the very process of negotiating the division of collections as a part of partition required the bureaucrats and politicians engaged in it to crystallise and articulate the value of collections to the nation, with the assistance of a transnational network of experts. Thus, it was not only historians who performed the 'task of introducing Pakistan and its rich civilization to the world';[95] archaeologists and museum professionals had a major part to play.However, the past — mediated by archaeologists, museums, and historians — was a currency deployed for different, sometimes contradictory, purposes across the international border. These were not always predetermined ideas: new ones evolved to accommodate the political realities of partition, as well as the monuments, artefacts, or manuscripts on the ground or in museums. There is a substantial body of writing that analyses the role of history (as a discipline) in shaping postcolonial identity, focussing largely on the formal educational curriculum.[96] The present work sits alongside this corpus. But it changes the emphasis, by concentrating on how material objects and remains in the *informal* educational space of the museum were no less important in shaping how India and Pakistan recounted history.

Here, I mean history in an inclusive sense: the study of the past, in which historians, archaeologists, art historians, museum curators, and archivists all play a role. As several examples in this thesis show, what are now perceived as watertight divisions between disciplines and institutions were far less assured in the mid-twentieth century. Despite the advantages of focus that these boundaries now provide, those of a less

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[95] Ali Usman Qasmi, 'A Master Narrative for the History of Pakistan: Tracing the Origins of an Ideological Agenda', *Modern Asian Studies*, 53:4 (2019), p. 13.

[96] Ayesha Jalal, 'Conjuring Pakistan: History as Official Imagining', *International Journal of Middle East Studies,* 27:1 (1995), pp. 73-89; Ali Usman Qasmi, 'A Master Narrative'. Though Jalal evaluates textbooks, her focus is on the Zia ul Haq period, and on the failure to create a shared imagined national community. Ali Usman Qasmi investigates Ishtiaq Hasan Qureshi, whose writings shaped the history taught in Pakistani schools, especially the Pakistan Studies component. Also see fn. 44 in this chapter.

insular outlook have also become evident to practitioners. Nevertheless, if proof is required that archaeologists and museum curators played a proactive role in fashioning histories, it is worth noting that Pakistan's first Museums Association conference in 1949, and its mission to secure and reinterpret the nation's past, predated the first Pakistan History Conference by two years.[97]

If public awareness and coverage are the yardsticks, both attracted a similar number of (and sometimes the same) high-profile speakers.[98] Dipesh Chakravarti has argued convincingly that history as a discipline in pre-partition India (which was Pakistan's legacy too) was shaped by its 'public' *and* 'cloistered' academic lives.[99] In other words, debates in the public domain, and the practice of history as a discipline, influence each other. Museum and historical associations counted professional and 'amateur' historians as well as archaeologists, numismatists, archivists, public servants and retired members of the armed forces amongst their number.[100] Even if this variety of perspective caused tensions, history, it is clear, must be recast as an umbrella word.[101] And although dominated by the educated elite, the concern to claim and construct a national past was broad-based.

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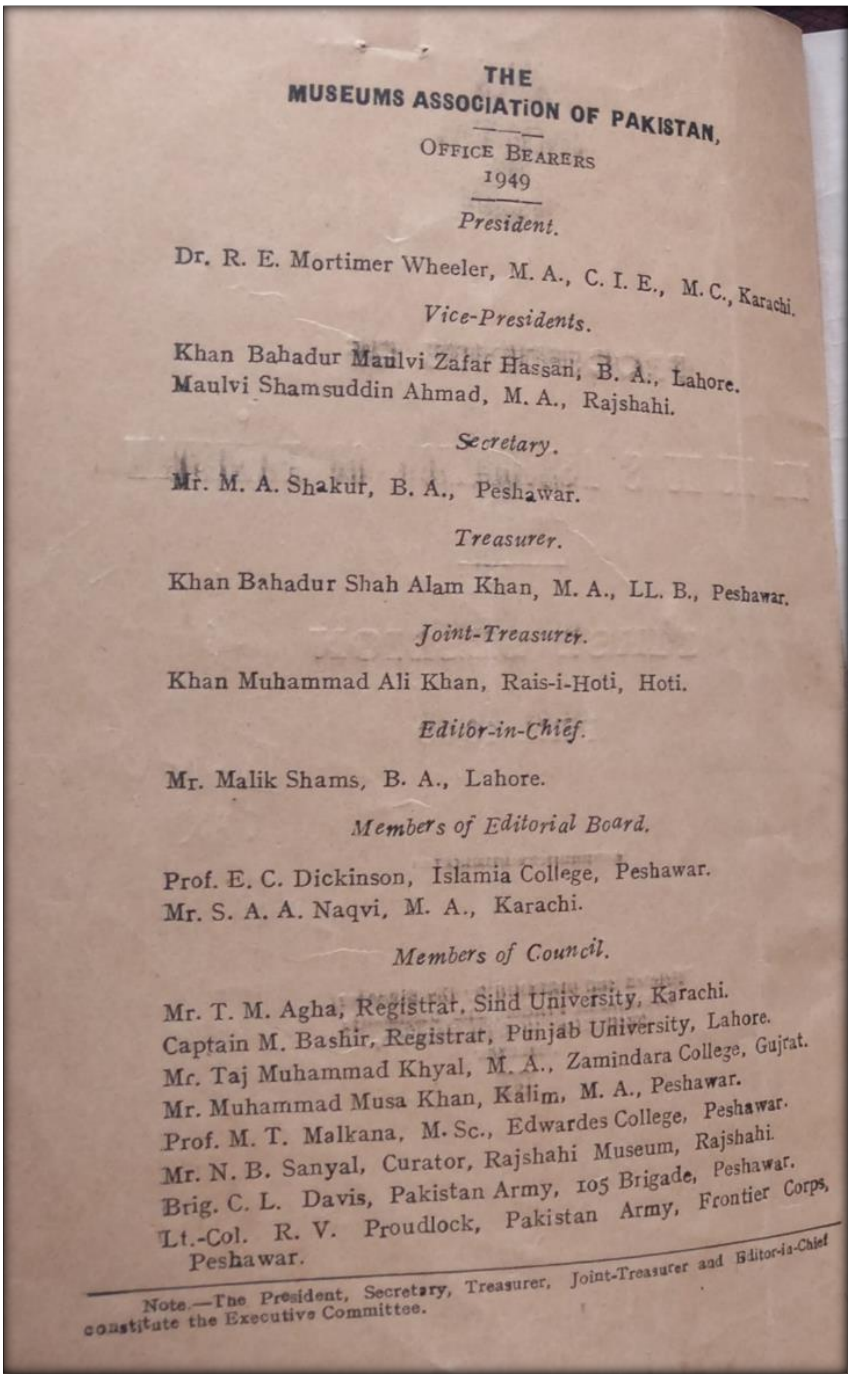
[97] The first Pakistan History conference was in 1951. Ali Usman Qasmi, 'A Master Narrative', p.15.

[98] *The Museums Journal,* 4:1 (1952). The Museum and History conferences appear to have been held in tandem at this time, or close together.

[99] Dipesh Chakrabarty, *The Calling of History: Sir Jadunath Sarkar and His Empire of Truth* (Ranikhet: Permanent Black/ Ashoka University, 2015).

[100] Office bearers in 1949 included academics, maulvis and members of the armed forces, in addition to archaeologists and curators; some were British. *Proceedings of the Museums Association of Pakistan, First Session, April 1949*.

[101] For an account of the historian Jadunath Sarkar's indifference to technical archival matters, and resistance to making the Indian Historical Records Commission an archival body, which other members in contrast pushed for, see Dipesh Chakrabarty, *The Calling of History*.



THE
MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION OF PAKISTAN,

OFFICE BEARERS
1949

President.

Dr. R. E. Mortimer Wheeler, M. A., C. I. E., M. C., Karachi.

Vice-Presidents.

Khan Bahadur Maulvi Zafar Hassan, B. A., Lahore.
Maulvi Shamsuddin Ahmad, M. A., Rajshahi.

Secretary.

Mr. M. A. Shakur, B. A., Peshawar.

Treasurer.

Khan Bahadur Shah Alam Khan, M. A., LL. B., Peshawar.

Joint-Treasurer.

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Captain M. Bashir, Registrar, Punjab University, Lahore.
Mr. Taj Muhammad Khyal, M. A., Zamindara College, Gujrat.
Mr. Muhammad Musa Khan, Kalim, M. A., Peshawar.
Prof. M. T. Malkana, M. Sc., Edwardes College, Peshawar.
Mr. N. B. Sanyal, Curator, Rajshahi Museum, Rajshahi.
Brig. C. L. Davis, Pakistan Army, 105 Brigade, Peshawar.
Lt.-Col. R. V. Proudlock, Pakistan Army, Frontier Corps, Peshawar.

Note.—The President, Secretary, Treasurer, Joint-Treasurer and Editor-in-Chief constitute the Executive Committee.

Fig 2.7: Inside cover of the proceedings of the first meeting of the Museums Association of Pakistan in April 1949.[102]

[102] Image: *Proceedings of the Museums Association of Pakistan, First Session, April 1949,* inside front cover. Courtesy Archaeological Library, Lahore Fort.

After its very first meeting, the Museums Association of Pakistan issued an appeal to colleagues, citizens, and the Governments of Pakistan (East and West) to participate and support it through memberships. It explained why historic collections and museums were relevant to the people and state of Pakistan:

> 'It is a sacred duty of any civilised people to collect, identify and preserve for posterity any heritage that may be useful for the promotion of scientific and artistic advancement. It has long been recognised that these services are being rendered by the agencies of museums and art galleries. The importance of visual education cannot be minimised and as such the display of all works of art and industry (whether old or new) of a country at a central place such as a museum has greater educational value. One of the functions of a museum is to preserve the heritage of the State and by adequate display and publicity to cultivate a more enlightened outlook. Few areas of the world are so rich in history and so fruitful in many respects as this State of Pakistan. Therefore the Museums Association of Pakistan has taken upon itself the responsibility of bringing into focus all the available data necessary for various aspects of national reconstruction; and also of safeguarding the cultural heritage of the State and of its true interpretation in the light of modern research.'[103]

The appeal is striking for presenting collecting as a 'sacred' duty, even if it is unsurprising in the context of Pakistan's founding as a homeland for the subcontinent's Muslims. It reiterates the equation of civilisation with the possession and display of antique objects, revealing the extent to which this idea was internalised. In part, these ideas derived from long-standing colonial frames of engagement with India's monuments and antiquities, extolled by the Viceroy Lord Curzon as "'a priceless heirloom, to be tenderly and almost *religiously* guarded by succeeding generations.'"[104]

There seems to have been no trouble recasting the 'services' of museums as being for 'the promotion of scientific and artistic advancement' rather than the real reasons the British founded them in South Asia: economic and imperial. The transition into institutions for 'national reconstruction' appears to have been seamless (really, construction, since the State whose heritage needed preservation was brand new). It is

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[103] *Proceedings of the Museums Association of Pakistan, First Session, April 1949*, p. 35.
[104] Lord Curzon, cited in Derek Linstrum, 'The Last of the Augustans: Lord Curzon and Indian Architecture' in *The Victoria Memorial Hall Calcutta: Conception, Collections, Conservation* ed. by Philippa Vaughan (Mumbai: Marg Publications, 1997), p. 27. Emphasis mine.

also noteworthy for connecting museums and visual education, evidence of the local application of a global concern. What a 'more enlightened outlook' meant in practice is unclear; one could speculate that in the context of nation-building, it meant a less parochial, more 'national' one (of which more later). The emphasis on 'modern research' was a gesture rejecting the shackles implied by a colonial past, reflecting the 'simplicity' of the Asian view of attaining modernity.[105] I will return to this point when considering *how* Pakistani museums reconciled the religious plurality of their material inheritance with the politico-religious compulsions of the Pakistani state.

Broadly speaking, the Association's practical aims were to improve existing museums by adding new galleries and facilities, open new museums, forge closer links with educational institutions and facilitate training opportunities to grow the profession. But the annual conference also offered a platform from which keynote and presidential speakers could ruminate on museums' role in interpreting Pakistan's history; and the ideological motivations or conundrums that vexed the profession. The main preoccupations were the role of museums in education; and museums and their collections as the legitimising 'props'[106] for Pakistan's (version of) history. Resolving the place of Pakistan's non-Muslim past in this narrative, and rationalising its study in a Muslim country, were of crucial importance.

In 1955, Professor A. B. A. Haleem, Vice Chancellor of Karachi University, reiterated that 'Museums [were] one of the foundations on which the History of a People is raised'.[107] He bemoaned the paucity of national collections and museums in 'a country so rich in ancient sites', arguing for more museums, including at the school level, if Pakistan was to preserve its cultural heritage. In a South Asian twist to the Kensington model, he was of the view that 'if our education is to fulfil the objective of training people for citizenship,' school museums ought to represent 'the life, culture, occupations and products of the area it serves, so that it can correlate scholarship to life and bridge

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[105] Sudipta Kaviraj, *The Imaginary Institution of India*, p.122.
[106] Simon J. Knell *et al*, *National Museums*, p. 4.
[107] *Proceedings of the Museums Association of Pakistan, Fifth Session, February 15-16 1955, Khairpur*, p. 9. The Proceedings of the Second, Third, and Fourth sessions were not available to consult, and all subsequent Proceedings do not have place of publication, publisher or year mentioned. The Fifth session, confusingly, also carries the title *The Museum Journal*.

the gap between theory and practice.'[108] In other words, they were to *make* people into Pakistanis through display and teaching.[109] Aside from illustrating how national collectives are 'imagined' — rather, moulded — Professor Haleem's anxiety to establish a firm foundation for the 'people' could perhaps be better understood given his own background as the former Pro Vice Chancellor of Aligarh Muslim University, an active member of the Muslim League, and the movement to create Pakistan.[110] Just one year earlier, the western portions of Pakistan had been constituted into One Unit.[111] This was touted as a sound administrative decision although many have questioned that interpretation, and subsequent events and scholarship have revealed complex political motives. It was the beginning of the slippery slope that led to East Pakistan seceding to form Bangladesh. The move also gave momentum to the very effect it had been designed to counteract, namely the resurgence of provincialism in what was then West Pakistan. The issue remains a challenge to sovereignty for the federal government of Pakistan today.[112]

So, it is likelier that Professor Haleem's emphasis on the need to make Pakistanis out of his 'people' stemmed from anxieties over provincial loyalties and national politics. His comments position museums at the heart of contemporary politics — they were not merely national showcases for historic objects. They were dynamic agents that shaped citizens, and influenced national politics by teaching them how to be Pakistani.

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[108] *Ibid.*

[109] See Eric J. Hobsbawm and Terence O. Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012) for the classic study of how nationals can be made by tutoring cultural habits.

[110] Shan Muhammad, *Education and Politics: From Sir Syed to the Present Day: the Aligarh School* (New Delhi: APH Publishing, 2002), p. 138. For more on university politics, and Muslim identities, see Laurence Gautier, 'The Role of Muslim Universities in the Redefinition of Indian Muslim Identities after Partition (1947-1990s)', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cambridge (2016); Laurence Gautier, 'A Laboratory for a Composite India? Jamia Millia Islamia Around the Time of Partition', *Modern Asian Studies,* 54:1 (2020), pp. 199-249.

[111] Ian Talbot, *Pakistan: A New History* (London: Hurst & Co., 2015), pp. 60-62.

[112] For an overview of the challenges and contradictions within Pakistan's notions of sovereignty including the deployment of Islam, see Ayesha Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule: The Origins of Pakistan's Political Economy of Defence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). Also see Christophe Jaffrelot, *The Pakistan Paradox: Instability and Resilience* (London: Hurst & Co., 2015). For a different take, on the role of 'crisis' and 'not getting it right' being integral 'to the fact of being of Pakistan', see Naveeda Khan (ed.), *Beyond Crisis: Re-evaluating Pakistan* (New Delhi: Routledge, 2010), p. 2.

Professor Haleem's successor at the podium in 1956 was his colleague Dr Mahmud Hussain, who had just finished his tenure as Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the University of Karachi. Aside from his academic career, he had served in politics. He had been the Minister for Education for a few months in 1953[113] and was part of the Pakistan History Board which published *A Short History of Hind-Pakistan* in 1960. Ali Usman Qasmi has discussed this book's role in creating an early 'master narrative' for the history of Pakistan, noting that while it did not disown the subcontinent's Hindu past, its endorsement of Buddhism and Jainism as a 'revolt' against the tyrannies of Hinduism had a clear ideological motivation. In contrast, Muslim and British actors, and their actions, were above criticism.[114]

Dr Hussain's comments to the Museums Association predate *A Short History* by four years. Although there is no archival evidence to confirm that he subsequently consulted his museum colleagues, it is reasonable to speculate that museum objects and historical debates (both within Pakistani *and* international museums), influenced his editorship of the book, in addition to factional politics. For not only was he convinced that the museums of the day would 'play a vital role in the programme of educating the masses,' he was certain that 'the history of Pakistan shall have to be rewritten on the basis of authentic materials available in our Museums.' Despite their modest scale, he averred that they were 'fairly rich in Muslim and pre-Muslim contributions to different aspects of life' which had been 'hitherto neglected.'[115]

Hussain commended the Association for acquainting international museums with the significant activities undertaken by Pakistan's museums, through its membership of and participation in ICOM. ICOM's founder member Grace Morley (who later became the first Director of the National Museum of India) represented the organisation at this meeting. Morley had been committed to museums and art since 1930, first as curator at the Cincinnati Art Museum and then as Director of the San Francisco Museum of Art. She was a pioneer in the field (especially museum education), and not only because she

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113 'Mahmud Husain Khan', *Banglapedia* [http://en.banglapedia.org/index.php?title=Khan,_Mahamud_Husain, accessed 7 July 2019].
114 Ali Usman Qasmi, 'A Master Narrative', pp. 17-21.
115 Dr Mahmud Husain, 'Presidential Address', *Proceedings of the Sixth Session of the Museums Conference, Karachi 1956*, p. 25.

had broken new ground in a 'man's job'.[116] On this occasion she spoke about the role of art museums in helping to reconstruct history, but her presence served another important function — that of substantiating Pakistan's presence on the international museum stage. Compared with India, whose 'nomenclature and civilization had been known globally for centuries…the newness of statehood was more pronounced' for Pakistan.[117] The name itself was a neologism, a point that was not lost on its leaders, who sought to 'correct' its newness through its antique civilisation and history.[118] Instances of this include the protracted wrangling over archaeological material;[119] or more seriously, Pakistan's efforts to garner international attention on the salinity affecting Mohenjo Daro (a project Wheeler led, with a committee of experts on behalf of UNESCO).[120]

The first session of the Pakistan National Committee for Co-operation amongst the Museums (in effect, the Pakistan ICOM Committee) was held in Hyderabad (Sindh), in 1959. The Director of Archaeology, F. A. Khan, delivered the Presidential Address. He spoke of the many ways in which his Department had helped to introduce Pakistan's museums to foreign countries through seminars, conferences, sending Buddhist art to Ceylon, and displaying Gandhara art in Europe. Significantly, he quoted Rene Huyghe (a French writer on art, and curator of paintings at the Louvre — demonstrating his familiarity with writings by European colleagues and by extension, part of his inter-connected global network), on the lack of translation needed to understand art from a different culture, and the oneness of mankind.[121] Khan's comments point to the global aspirations of the Pakistani historical fraternity, in its broadest sense.

Andrew Amstutz argues,[122] that 'in museum exhibits, archaeological publications and historical addresses from 1950 to 1969',[123] Buddhism and its objects were placed at

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116 Kristina K. Phillips, 'A Museum for the Nation: Publics and Politics at the National Museum of India', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Minnesota (2006), pp. 133-135.
117 Ali Usman Qasmi, 'A Master Narrative', p. 13.
118 *Ibid.*
119 See previous chapter in this thesis.
120 Wheeler Archive F/1/8, F/1/12, UCL Special Collections, London.
121 *The Museums Journal*, 12:1 (1959), p. 43.
122 Andrew Amstutz, 'A Pakistani Homeland for Buddhism: Displaying a National History for Pakistan beyond Islam, 1950-1969', *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies,* 42:2 (2019), pp. 237-255.
123 *Ibid.*, p. 255.

the centre to achieve a number of goals, or alternately, resolve problems. They provided 'a deep historical model'[124] that explained Pakistan's differences from Hindu India (since Buddhism was interpreted as a 'revolt' against Hinduism) and connected Pakistan's two wings through their Buddhist past. It also established a profound commitment to religious faith that could be presented as stemming from East and West Pakistan's very soil — even though the nature of the faith later changed from Buddhism to Islam.

Ali Usman Qasmi sees the foregrounding of Buddhist heritage as shorter-lived and of less significance than Amstutz would have us think, but Qasmi's longue durée analysis of the evolution of a 'master narrative' for Pakistan's history is not in fact compromised by allowing for it.[125] On the contrary, it demonstrates the wide-ranging and serious effort by the allied historical professions to resolve the contradictions of a Muslim state whose antiquity was, in the main, attested to by a non-Muslim heritage. Ananya Jahanara Kabir has written of the cosmopolitan networks between East and West Pakistan, which the new government relied on 'to build a national humanities infrastructure', calling it a 'lost tale…of a new nation in search of a narrative of origins beyond Islam that would, additionally, unite its eastern and western wings'.[126] She too remarks on the role of Buddhist heritage, but in the context of pottery, or terracotta traditions; of literally rooting oneself through objects made of the earth, connecting it to the 'living' terracotta traditions of South Asia. Interestingly, Afghanistan used its Buddhist past in similar ways only a little earlier in the twentieth century, 'as a means of civilizationally "normalising" [itself] on an international stage',[127] and asserting its primacy in the region by claiming itself the true homeland of the Buddha, rather than India. Perhaps the Pakistanis were taking a leaf out of their neighbours' book.[128]

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124 *Ibid.*

125 Ali Usman Qasmi, 'A Master Narrative'

126 Ananya Jahanara Kabir, *Partition's Post-Amnesias* (New Delhi: Women Unlimited, 2013), pp. 89, 85-104.

127 Nile Green, 'The Afghan Discovery of Buddha: Civilizational History and the Nationalizing of Afghan Antiquity', *International Journal of Middle East Studies,* 49 (2017), p. 61.

128 The Gandhara 'style' has been invented for, and subjected to, differing ideological purposes over the past two centuries. Michael Falser, 'The Graeco-Buddhist Style of Gandhara — a "Storia Ideologica", Or: How a Discourse Makes a Global History of Art', *Journal of Art Historiography*, 13 (2015), pp. 1-53. To pick up where Falser leaves off (with the destruction of the

One way that Pakistani historians, archaeologists and museologists dealt with their dilemma was by extracting a moral lesson in the rise and fall of past civilisations like Mohenjo Daro, which 'proved…the Quranic dictum that even the mightiest meet their doom when they distract from the path of righteousness.'[129] Abjuring any temptation towards 'ancestor worship', the museum profession had to 'pick and choose in the light of standards set…by Islam', and avoid being seduced by 'the archaeological and cultural remains of past civilisations' in Pakistani territory, regardless of one's admiration for them.[130] It provides an interesting slant to the argument that 'modernity emerged with Islam…was forgotten because Muslims retreated to the traditional world, only to rediscover this modernity in nineteenth-century Europe'.[131] Islam remained modern, albeit in an 'apologetic' way. By this logic, one could speculate that archaeological remains represented either the ancient world that predated Islam's appearance or Muslims' first moment of modernity. More recent remains might appear the 'traditional world' that obscured Muslims' access to modernity.

This idea is supported by another, related rationale that drew on Islam's spirit of enquiry and 'academic tradition', juxtaposed against the blind Indian/ Hindu tendency to venerate historic objects as relics of past ancestry. This cast historic sites and collections as 'objects of academic study', to be approached 'with the same spirit with which various examples of ancient peoples are recorded in the Holy Quran.'[132] The distancing that this accomplishes, signals, by contrast, proximity to modern ideas of scholarship.

It achieved multiple goals. It generated a safe distance from disconcerting reminders of an overwhelming Hindu (and Sikh) past whilst *simultaneously* (re)claiming Pakistan's modern credentials through Islam, and allowing its antiquities to function as currency in the international museum market. It is also possible that these approaches derived from ideas that 'recast Islam as a universalising and postcolonial religion…rooted in a reconstructed and self-reflexive faith…[which was] as relevant to the postcolonial

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Bamiyan Buddhas) see Kavita Singh, *Museums, Heritage, Culture: Into the Conflict Zone* (Amsterdam: Reinwardt Academy, 2015).

[129] *Proceedings of the Twelfth Museums Conference held at Peshawar, 6-8 April 1962*, pp. 2, 20.

[130] *Ibid.*

[131] Faisal Devji, 'Apologetic Modernity', *Modern Intellectual History*, 4:1 (2007), p. 68.

[132] A. H. Dani, 'Future of Museums in Pakistan', *The Museums Journal*, 13:1 (1961), pp. 7-8.

reconstitution of other communities…in South Asia'.[133] In other words, having a self-reflexive faith, in which 'ruination and reconstruction'[134] were necessary components, was one way of *being* postcolonial, thus endowing the ruins of the past with an essential function; but this suggestion is tentative, and bears further investigation.

And what of Pakistan's Sikh heritage, of which many major sites and collections were in the 'wrong' Punjab? In what would appear to be a counterintuitive decision, Pakistan's Department of Archaeology acquired Princess Bamba Sutherland's collection in 1962 to 'form a nucleus of a proposed Sikh Museum at Lahore.'[135] This was put on display in a special exhibition inaugurated by the then President Ayub Khan. Bamba was the last surviving grandchild of Maharaja Ranjit Singh of Lahore, and had died in the city in 1957, after settling there in 1915 and subsequently marrying David Waters Sutherland, Principal of the King Edward Medical College, Lahore. Hers was:

> 'A unique collection of the Sikh Royal Treasures containing water colour and oil paintings, a silver model of the procession of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, bejewelled horse-trappings and a gold plated umbrella'[136] housed 'in the Jindan Haveli at Lahore Fort [from which] the accretions of the Sikh and British periods were removed from a number of buildings in order to bring out the beauty of the original Moghul design.'[137]

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[133] Javed Majeed, *Muhammad Iqbal: Islam, Aesthetics and Postcolonialism* (New Delhi: Routledge, 2009), pp. xxv-xxvi. Also see Iftikhar Dadi, *Modernism and the Art of Muslim South Asia* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010).
[134] Javed Majeed, *Muhammad Iqbal*, p. 15.
[135] *Proceedings of the Twelfth Museums Conference held at Peshawar, 6-8 April 1962,* p. 27.
[136] *Ibid.*
[137] Mumtaz Hasan, 'Presidential Address', *Proceedings of the 15th All Pakistan Museums Conference held at Hyderabad, 26-28 March 1965,* p. 32.

Figs 2.8 & 2.9: President Muhammad Ayub Khan inaugurating the special exhibition of the Sikh treasures (above), and viewing the exhibition (below). A catalogue was also produced.[138]

[138] Images: *The Museums Journal,* 14 (1962), pp. 53-54. Courtesy Archaeological Library, Lahore Fort.

Fig 2.10: Watercolour of Maharaja Dalip Singh reproduced in the catalogue (after Winterhalter). A reproduction of the Winterhalter portrait in Osborne House is visible behind the President in Fig 2.9.[139]

[139] Image: *Ibid.*, p. 11. Courtesy Archaeological Library, Lahore Fort.

Conservation architects or conservators today would hesitate to remove later changes to a building or artwork, since they become a part of an object's history and authenticity. Removing Sikh and British layers from the buildings of the Lahore Fort doubtless had a political motive at this time, to highlight the Fort's Muslim identity. And yet, it was being filled with objects associated with the Sikhs, with a high-profile inauguration. Bamba herself does not appear to have played an active role in Punjab politics;[140] therefore the symbolic value was the connection to Ranjit Singh. It claimed a glorious (and militarily victorious) royal past for the nation rooted in the soil of Pakistani Punjab. As we shall see later on, regional, and national governments 'collecting' princely objects to construct identity was a strategy that India and Pakistan shared.

The decision to acquire a Sikh collection and house it in a reinvigorated Mughal building also suggests a contradictory impulse to be modern and non-partisan in the patronage of the past, whilst being pulled towards its most obvious Islamic elements. The 1960s in Pakistan are still remembered as 'golden'; the 'decade of development' during which 'for many Pakistanis the Islamic element in the nation's identity did not seem to clash with aspirations of "modernity"'. [141] This was despite growing tensions between the two wings of the country, and the disastrous war of 1965 with India whose fallout later forced Ayub Khan out of office.[142]

One emblem of Pakistani modernity was the new capital of Islamabad. Islamabad's architectural vocabulary, as evolved by its Greek planner Constantinos A. Doxiadis, referred to the 'simple', 'clean' and indigenously 'modern' folk architecture that harked back to the buildings and urban systems of Mohenjo Daro, their human scale, and settlement/ cluster pattern.[143] Markus Daechsel points out that although similar in several superficial respects (grid plan, sectors, traffic circulation), Islamabad's 'planned' character

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140 Dr Patrick Clibbens, personal communication, December 2019. She inaugurated the Sikh History Society in 1945 (which was a precursor to the Punjab History conference held in Indian Punjab). *Punjab History Conference, First Session (November 12-14 1965)* (Patiala: Punjabi University, 1966), p. 7.

141 Marcus Daechsel, *Islamabad*, pp. 2-3.

142 *Ibid.*

143 *Ibid.*

was different from its 'designed' Indian competitor, Chandigarh, in fundamental ways.[144] It was the former's functional nature that signalled its modernity, standing for 'a social order to which the state [and its ideology] was almost incidental'.[145] And yet, development and modernity had to coexist with a postcolonial nationalism defined by Islam. In a telling example, the Capital Development Authority chose 'a faintly horticultural and conservative logo' for the city that referred more 'to the Mughal past than to developmental ambitions', and instead of the Indus Valley inspired motif that Doxiadis had proposed.[146]

Museum professionals also thought (with some hubris) that they could settle thorny, urgent questions that affected the national narrative. The origin of the Urdu language was one such. Despite its demonstrably hybrid origins, the language had been co-opted to symbolise the 'two-nation' theory, standing in interchangeably (at least for some) for Muslims and Pakistan in the public imagination. In consequence, its career after partition differed: in India, it led to ghettoization, whereas in Pakistan, it was declared the national language. But rather than building national cohesion in Pakistan, it exacerbated tensions between the Eastern Bengali-speaking wing and the rest of the country. Scholars agree that it became one among the many inequalities perpetuated by West Pakistan against the East, which led to the latter seceding in 1971. It also antagonised all the regional language speakers in West Pakistan, who resented the imposition of the language of elite migrants from central India (which was what Urdu was, in effect), over the many languages of their land.[147] So the origin of Urdu was not insignificant for Pakistan. Once again, it was the museum which provided a forum for debating a question of political and cultural importance for the nation.

Several locations were contenders for being Urdu's birthplace (some in the Deccan). Punjab and Sind's claims were said to be stronger, for that was the route by which Turks, Arabs, Afghans, and Islam under the invading Ummayad general

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144 *Ibid.,* pp. 221-223. See Lawrence J. Vale, *Architecture, Power and National Identity* (London; New York: Routledge, 2008, 2nd edn). More on Chandigarh is in Chapter V of this thesis.
145 Marcus Daechsel, *Islamabad,* pp. 6, 214-215.
146 *Ibid.*
147 Ian Talbot, *Pakistan.* Also see Alyssa Ayres, *Speaking like a State: Language and Nationalism in Pakistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

Muhammad bin Qasim, made landfall. It was a pivotal moment to which Pakistan traced its origins.[148] But in order to prove this, Pakistan's museums would have had to find manuscripts from the seventh century[149] (unlikely given the subcontinent's climate). Despite evidence to the contrary, the 'Pakistan Studies' curriculum taught at various levels of the education system in Pakistan continues to propagate this view, as do 'neutral' publications like *The Oxford Companion to Pakistani History*, revealing just how foundational it has become. The entry for 'Archaeology' begins with the Indus Valley, jumps straight to Buddhist remains, crams Hindu remains into a list teeming with Scythians, Sassanians, and Turks; and concludes with 'the arrival of the Arabs in the Indian subcontinent under the command of Muhammad-bin-Qasim in AD 711', followed by accounts of later Muslim rule.[150] In reality, the first Arabs in the sub-continent arrived as traders long before the tenth century. It was the maritime trade network encompassing South and South East Asia that first spurred Islam's growth in the region, as much as, or even more than invasion and military expansion.[151]

Other internal tensions within Pakistan were also in evidence in the museum forum. Twelve years after independence, there was still no museum of national stature at the East Pakistan capital of Dacca. Proposals and encouraging noises were made and reported, but till 1959, nothing had come of them. An Art Institute and a Public Library were in place, but East Pakistani delegates bemoaned with regularity the federal government's inability to spare 'a few lakhs of rupees for the sake of such an important nation-building institution' which they felt impeded a 'real beginning of a rich cultural life'.[152]

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148 Ayesha Jalal, 'Conjuring Pakistan'.
149 Sardar Abdul Hamid Khan Dasti, 'Presidential Address', *The Museums Journal,* 3: Special (1951-1952), p. 6-7.
150 Nadia Ghani, 'Archaeology' in *The Oxford Companion to Pakistani History* ed. by Ayesha Jalal (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 34-35.
151 Francis Robinson, 'Introduction' in *The Islamic World in the Age of Western Dominance* ed. by Francis Robinson (The New Cambridge History of Islam, Vol. 5, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 8-12; M. H. Ilias, 'Mappila Muslims and the Cultural Content of Trading Arab Diaspora on the Malabar Coast', *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 35:4-5 (2007), pp. 434-456. Yasser Arafath discusses the deep-rooted transnational knowledge networks that linked southern India with the Arab peninsula in 'Malabar Ulema in the Shafiite Cosmopolis: Fitna, Piety and Resistance in the Age of Fasad', *The Medieval History Journal,* 21:1 (2018), pp. 25-68.
152 Abu Imam, 'We need a Museum at Dacca', *The Museums Journal*, 12:1 (1959), p. 64.

At the other end of the spectrum were former princely states, whose historic royal collections — and in many cases, pre-existing museums — provided a ready-made resource. Aside from Princess Bamba's collection, there were others with a different trajectory of incorporation. Inaugurating the Bahawalpur Museum on 11 February 1960, the Commissioner Mussarrat Husain Zuberi assimilated it into the national story by recalling the region's history as an early home for Islam on the subcontinent, and commending Bahawalpur state's role in preserving Muslim traditions of learning and culture.[153] Yaqoob Bangash has shown that the merger of princely states with Pakistan diverged from India's in several respects:[154] it was a staggered process over a longer period of time, had less defined goals, and varied from state to state. The states in question also had different characteristics. Several were tribal societies, loosely integrated into the colonial client-patron system. Bahawalpur and Khairpur, being geographically located within Punjab and Sindh, retained strong connections with the Indian heartland.[155] In contrast, the 'Frontier' states in Pakistan's northwest looked further afield in those directions to Afghanistan and Central Asia; while Baluchistan looked west to Iran and the Persian Gulf states for its cultural connections. These considerations added to the 'usual reasons' for Pakistan's alleged feudalism. The rulers of princely states in Pakistan did not lose their compensation from the federal government (the label changed from 'Privy Purse' to 'allowance') and retain privileges to this day (unlike in India, where they were abolished in 1971[156]).

In subsequent chapters, I will argue that the princes in India strategically used their 'soft power', exemplified by their art collections, to negotiate a new place for themselves in independent India. It is tempting to interpret the Bahawalpur example in this light, but for the fact that the precise circumstances differed. Even if the princely states (especially after independence) remain largely unstudied, lumping them together as 'princely states'

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153 Mussarrat Husain Zuberi, 'Welcome Address', *The Museums Journal,* 12:2 (1960), p. 54.
154 Yaqoob Khan Bangash, *A Princely Affair: The Accession and Integration of the Princely States of Pakistan, 1947-1955* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 1-25, 382-386.
155 See Ian Talbot and Tahir Kamran, *Colonial Lahore: A History of the City and Beyond* (London: Hurst & Co., 2016). They connect Lahore intimately to the Indian heartland, but also show it was a cosmopolitan centre with global links.
156 26th Constitutional Amendment Bill [http://legislative.gov.in/constitution-twenty-sixth-amendment-act-1971, accessed 21 July 2020].

is unproductive for it obscures the complexities of their relationship to one another and the central government, whether colonial or South Asian.[157] A detailed exploration lies outside the scope of this thesis, but there remains tremendous potential for princely state museums to help us comprehend the evolution of Pakistani state sovereignty and regional politics.

Museums at Work in India

Across the border in 'big sister' India, Mortimer Wheeler had started things off in similar style. In his Presidential Address at the 1947-1948 session of the Museums Association, he reiterated the need for a National Museum, long overdue:

> 'To-day, India is the only civilised country in the world without this essential provision, and India's new leaders are well aware of the nature and urgency of the need...'[158]

Both India and Pakistan faced the challenge of asserting legitimacy and sovereignty in forms that were recognisably different from the preceding Raj, reconciling their aspirations for 'modern' European modes of governance while rejecting colonial rule. But in some ways, the colonial and nationalist projects mirror each other, 'presenting a past that enshrines contemporary hopes'.[159] Here, Wheeler's placement of the onus for a National Museum on India's national leaders re-inscribed colonial — and older — approaches to establishing legitimacy, by linking it with state control over, and responsibility for, the past.

By and large, the sources[160] reveal a similar earnestness about history and nation-building, and challenges, as those Pakistan faced — the lack of government funding, of infrastructure, of trained personnel, and lukewarm public interest — or so the Indian

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157 Yaqoob Khan Bangash, *A Princely Affair*, pp. 1-25, 382-386.
158 'Indian Museums Association Presidential Address 1947-48', p. 1, Wheeler Archive W/13.
159 Sudeshna Guha, *Artefacts of History*, p. 239.
160 In addition to the references cited, the following section is based on a review of *The Journal of Indian Museums* between 1945-1970.

museum profession felt. Lack of interest appears to have been a matter of perception. For instance, at its opening, both locals and visitors flocked to Jaipur's Albert Hall Museum, with annual numbers exceeding a quarter of a million people. Just over a decade later, it had attracted close to three million;[161] so, historical precedent showed that Indians were not averse to museums.[162] In addition to the statistics, bureaucrats and museum professionals alike use models developed for Europe and North America to rate the success of visitor engagement in South Asia. But being a visitor is not the only way to engage with museums and their nation-building projects. I will return to this point later, when discussing the Punjab Museum (later the Chandigarh Museum).

Both the bias towards art and archaeology, and the need to develop other kinds of museums were shared (whether ethnographic, natural history or 'industrial'). For while the former helped people understand the 'glorious' tradition of India's past history, the thinking went, science and technology would help it engage with the future.[163] In the last years of the second five-year plan, 'a growing realization of the vital role that Indian museums can play in the life of the people',[164] especially through 'visual education'[165] led the Government of India to launch the all-India scheme for the Reorganization and Development of Museums under the Central Advisory Board of Museums. Most of the larger multi-purpose museums around the country became eligible for financial assistance across a range of heads from infrastructure development to new displays[166] although the government also encouraged specialisation.[167]

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161 Giles Tillotson, 'The Jaipur Exhibition of 1883', pp. 123-124.
162 Kristina Phillips comments on the new seriousness with which India approached museums after independence, as more than just a source of entertainment. Kristina K. Phillips, 'A Museum for the Nation', pp. 287-288. However, this is precisely Bhatti's question — why not evaluate South Asian museums through a local lens, which might not preclude entertainment? Shaila Bhatti, *Translating Museums.*
163 V. L. Devkar, 'Introduction', *Indian Museums Review 1957-58* (New Delhi: Ministry of Scientific Research and Cultural Affairs, Government of India, 1959), pp. vii-viii.
164 S. T. Satyamurti, 'Introduction', *Indian Museums Review 1959-60 & 1960-61* (New Delhi: Ministry of Scientific Research and Cultural Affairs, Government of India, 1961), p. v.
165 File 33-52/54 H2, Ministry of Education, National Archives of India; 'Importance of Museums in Education', *The Times of India,* 24 October 1948 (ProQuest Historical Newspapers, accessed 22 May 2017).
166 S. T. Satyamurti, 'Introduction', p. v.
167 V. L. Devkar, 'Introduction', *Indian Museums Review 1958-1959* (New Delhi: Ministry of Scientific Research and Cultural Affairs, Government of India, 1960), pp. v-vi.

Within archaeology itself, excavations remained an important source for acquisitions. Guha has drawn attention to the post-independence bias towards exploring India's pre-historic and ancient Hindu past, at the cost of sites connected with India's Islamic and later history, which were quietly demoted in priority.[168] It did not escape Wheeler's notice when he reviewed the Survey in 1964-1965. He recommended recovering 'at least' the street plan of Akbar's Fatehpur Sikri, as it would represent a 'complete innovation' in Indian archaeology and encourage research on mediaeval and later periods, which had previously been 'neglected'.[169]

India shared with Pakistan its obsession for terracotta or pottery as archaeological evidence in these post-partition years, reflecting a shared, visceral need to connect to the land, which earthen objects made possible in unique ways.[170] These are some of the many striking similarities in the framework within which Indian and Pakistani museums interpreted their respective pasts. They were at once internationally oriented, rooted in development driven discourse, and took a predominantly ethno-nationalist approach. This suggests that both were motivated in part, at least, by a recognition of the different audiences for whom the nation was being constructed — whether global or domestic.

Museums and material culture constituted currency with universal value. To engage on equal terms with their global peers, the latest arrivals on the stage had to show they had enough of it, that the world would,

> 'have at its disposal ample resources in museum institutions, museum organization, programmes and activities, and, even more important, in museum personnel…veteran Indian Museum leaders, together with eager younger men and women in the profession, form[ing] a company of proven competence and of considerable size…ready to help'[171] to achieve the international museum movement's goals.

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168 Sudeshna Guha, *Artefacts of History.* Also see Sudeshna Guha, 'Heritage and the Curation of the Archaeological Scholarship of India' in V. Selvakumar, S. Hemanth, S. K. Aruni (eds.), *South Asian Archaeology — from the Palaeolithic to the Present: Essays in Honour of Prof K. Paddayya* (forthcoming). I am grateful to Dr Guha for sharing the pre-print version of this article.
169 'Archaeological Review Committee,1965 — Report' in *Committees and Commissions in India 1947-73, Vol VI: 1964-65* ed. by Virendra Kumar (Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 1975), p. 318.
170 Ananya Jahanara Kabir, *Partition's Post-Amnesias*, pp. 85-104.
171 Grace Morley, 'Museums in India', pp. 225-226.

The debate on what Indian museums should collect and showcase was wide ranging. Should museums be 'universal' or 'national' in their outlook? Hermann Goetz, the German-origin historian of Indian art was Director of the Baroda Museum and Picture Gallery from 1939-1953, and subsequently the first Director of the National Gallery of Modern Art (opened in 1954) until 1955. He argued for an international outlook and 'universal' mandate for India's national museums:

> 'For, in a modern world we are no more isolated. Our foreign relations are now in our own hands, and we have to educate our public to an outlook encompassing the entire globe and all mankind and we have likewise to publicize India in other countries. This is an integral aspect of the national policy of an independent country. Therefore our museums have to include such a perspective into their programme, if they intend to be mediums of visual education for a modern India.'[172]

In this age of the 'footloose' international consultant, it was not a paradox that foreigners ran several national Indian institutions (notwithstanding Indian ambivalence to employing the British). It not only weights the balance in favour of cosmopolitanism, but also challenges our assumptions on who had the right or ability to curate the nation. But depending on who was at the helm, the meaning of 'national' shifted. Where museums positioned themselves on the 'cosmopolitan-nationalist continuum'[173] also changed.

In the case of the National Museum, New Delhi, until about 1960,[174] it was the Nehru-led government that was in charge.[175] It distinguished the Museum from colonially established or former princely collections (such as the Indian Museum, Calcutta or the Salar Jung, Hyderabad, respectively), and saw its role as a monument to the nation at its capital or heart, and a role model for other museums.

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[172] Hermann Goetz, 'The Problem of Foreign Collections: Their Acquisition, Selection and Display', *The Journal of Indian Museums,* 6 (1950), p. 26.
[173] Peggy Levitt, *Artifacts and Allegiances,* p. 135.
[174] Kristina Phillips outlines four phases until the late twentieth century; I will limit myself to discussing the first two, which align with the present study. Kristina K. Phillips, 'A Museum for the Nation'.
[175] There was no formal Director, and the collections were still on temporary display at the Rashtrapati Bhavan while a new building was being readied.

With the appointment of Grace Morley as the first Director from 1960-1966, the National Museum's vision embraced the American model of development (in a welcome respite from the European). She acquired the Heeramaneck collection of Pre–Colombian Art for the National Museum in 1966 at the end of her tenure, a move that epitomised the push to be 'universal' and combat narrow nationalism or regionalism. She considered it a triumph, as it would now be possible to further the National Museum's educational mandate through cultural comparison.[176] To this end there was even a UNESCO 'project for fostering the development of a collection of Western Art in the National Museum, New Delhi' so that:

> 'sympathy and appreciation of cultures of varied traditions could be helpfully advanced by knowledge of their art, especially when the cultures differed greatly, had arisen at a distance from one another, and from different premises in different settings, expressing different national personalities.'[177]

Anxieties about national ownership and bureaucratic tangles over paperwork and permissions meant that it failed to acquire traction.[178]

Morley was instrumental in 'Nehru's urgent project to fashion a global image of the newly independent country while giving shape to a burgeoning national identity at home', marrying her 'commitment to American modern museology with the aspirations of India's new nationalist government.'[179] Phillips notes that her 'development' of an art museum did not involve rethinking Indian art history. Rather, it took the form of technical training (display techniques, lighting, furniture),[180] and the panacea of 'science' (she established a conservation laboratory). She sent staff abroad for training,[181] which furthered the transnational networks within the field. But as later chapters will reveal,

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176 Grace Morley, 'Pre Colombian Art at the National Museum', *Museum* 22:1 (1969), pp. 39-44. There is no mention of provenance, reflecting a now outdated sense of ease on this matter.
177 *Ibid.*
178 There was only one exchange by 1969.
179 Kristina K. Phillips, 'A Museum for the Nation', p. 132.
180 Which remains, in many ways, the focus of the Indian museum profession, such as in Lalima Dhar Chakrabarti, *Managing Museums: A Study of the National Museum, New Delhi* (New Delhi: Sundeep Prakashan, 2007). Rather than being an Indian-authored study of the museum to complement Phillips's, it was all about 'technical' professional matters, and at best, an uncritical summary of the museum's history.
181 Kristina K. Phillips, 'A Museum for the Nation', p. 286.

rather than being 'missing' from the agenda at this time, art history was being shaped by a transnational network of scholars, located in institutions *other than* the National Museum. Morley was a part of it, and facilitated it in her own way; whether by supporting art publication programmes, or lending her considerable international clout in support of the network's reformulation of art, and its institutional display.

Establishing Chandigarh on the International Museum Map

Notwithstanding the National Museum and the government's goal of 'unifying the country',[182] there were active regional contenders for role models, and alternate imaginaries of the national at play, right from the National Museum's early years. They included museums in the former princely states which I discuss in the next chapter, as well as regional government institutions. One that grew to present a genuine challenge was what became known as the Chandigarh Museum.

Unhampered by New Delhi's painful recent imperial history, and a symbol of hope for a resurgent Asia, Chandigarh was the new capital India commissioned for East Punjab, after the loss of Lahore during partition. Putting a museum (of whatever conception) at the heart of such a city was not surprising given the cultural background of its architects — the master plan by the American Albert Mayer was refined by the Swiss-French Corbusier, who also designed the major public buildings, including the Museum. Further, not only were they applying familiar European ideas in creating independent India's first planned city; they did so *in order to* revolutionise urban design and civic life in India. If the National Museum's specific location at the heart of New Delhi redeployed imperial spatial hierarchies to position it as a monument to and of the nation,[183] the Chandigarh Museum's performed a similar role. Located next to the Government College of Art and near the new University campus, it embodied the ideals of the post-War world — of education, science and international cooperation — at the

[182] *Ibid.*, p. 21.
[183] *Ibid.*, pp. 125-128.

heart (literally, since Corbusier conceived the city as a human body and those sectors as the torso[184]) of this new start for India. It enshrined and embodied the nation with even greater power, not just within the nation, but without.

Following the end of her appointment as Director of the National Museum, Grace Morley became Special Advisor on Museums to the Government of India in 1966. In this capacity, the Punjab Government invited her to submit a comprehensive report on the new Punjab Museum (the Chandigarh Museum's original name and mandate) building, and — notably — technical aspects such as the 'use of collections, and of working and storage space, on staff, on installation, etc.'.[185] She thought that the collections had become activated in their modern home for the first time, in contrast to 'their former passive role, in Lahore', passing at last 'to a fully professional modern museum of outstanding distinction, with all that is implied in adequate staff and active programmes.'[186] She compared the building favourably with Corbusier's other museum projects in Tokyo and Ahmedabad, commending its 'aesthetic success' but noted that a 'successful monument' does not a good museum make; and to the potential conflict between the importance of a building and what it houses.[187] It was a perceptive and prescient insight.

The collections themselves were, according to her, 'of major importance for India: the largest and finest collection of Gandhara sculptures in the country; the largest and finest group of miniatures of the Punjabi Pahari courts in the world;' both representing 'high points of achievement of art in the Panjab at their respective periods', and with 'enormous' monetary value.[188] Then, as now, the Museum does not have an explicit focus on Sikh history and heritage as it is intended to represent the region. And yet, subsequent chapters will demonstrate the ways in which its collections undercut such neutral aims.

The Museum had also begun to acquire modern Indian art from 1962, which promised 'to become one of the most important collections…in the country, perhaps in its size and quality even challenging the collection of the National Gallery of Modern Art,

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184 Ravi Kalia, *Chandigarh: the Making of an Indian City* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1988).
185 Title of Grace Morley's Report, Archer Papers, Mss Eur F236/303, British Library.
186 *Ibid.*, p. 4.
187 *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.
188 *Ibid.*, pp.7-8.

New Delhi.'[189] The newness of the 'monument' and the innovative displays that it would require assured Morley that 'when the Chandigarh Museum opens, it will be recognized not only as a major museum in India, as it will necessarily be by virtue of its collections, but certainly it will be hailed throughout the world as an outstanding museum institution.'[190] She drew attention to Chandigarh's international tourist potential and its likely contribution to the nation's economic development (a scenario backed by nothing less than a worldwide UNESCO study), augmented by its established architectural reputation, the new museum, Punjab's 'lovely landscape' and technological achievements such as the new Bhakra Dam.[191]

She made the case for India's performance on a global stage, which depended heavily on who was canvassing for one. Morley's UNESCO and ICOM connections provided her important leverage that yielded an astonishing amount of visibility to Indian museums (including Chandigarh),[192] when compared to the three articles on Pakistani museums that appeared over the same period in *Museum*. But her views also served to rehabilitate Punjab's tarnished reputation at partition, which in turn owed much to the art historical networks she was a part of and that I will discuss in later chapters. Grace Morley remained active in ICOM into the 1970s, and lived her remaining years in New Delhi. She was a globally respected museum professional, burnished by her reputation as the 'mother' of Indian museology.[193]

It is difficult to estimate with accuracy the impact that India and Pakistan achieved through their object-based cultural diplomacy. Anecdotal evidence suggests that it was mixed: it depended on the intended audience, and what counted as impact.[194] But if

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189 *Ibid.*
190 *Ibid.*
191 *Ibid.*
192 Grace Morley, 'Museums of Chandigarh', *Museum,* 23:4 (1970-71), pp. 290-294. File 1621, Chandigarh City Museum (accessed at the Government Museum and Art Gallery Library), pp. 84-86 for an undated (probably copy) of a letter from Grace Morley to M. S. Randhawa after the Chandigarh Museum's inauguration in which she is explicit about raising the Museum's profile through a feature in *Museum*, and the role she hoped to continue to play in assisting Indian museums (her term as Museum Advisor had ended earlier that month).
193 She is still referred to as such within the Indian museum profession.
194 Dr Darielle Mason, for one, suggests that it made little or no impact on United States foreign policy. Personal communication, April 2019. But Brinda Kumar suggests that the reverse took

impact meant visibility, messaging, and perception, and if domestic audiences were as much a target as the international, the possibilities are more thought-provoking. I will argue in later chapters that the Chandigarh Museum was better placed to execute this 'double act', which also served to reinforce its challenge to the National Museum's hegemonic position.

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place, i.e. the US foreign policy impacted collections of Indian art in America. See 'Of Networks and Narratives'. Claire Wintle's analysis of the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History (ethnographic) displays on Asia and Africa in the context of the Cold War also supports this. 'Decolonising the Smithsonian: Microcosms of Political Encounter', *The American Historical Review,* 121:5 (2016), pp. 1492-1520.

III

COLLECTING FOR EAST PUNJAB

Fig 3.1: Anarkali's Tomb, Lahore, formerly the Central Record Office, now the Punjab Archives.[1]

[1] Image: Author.

Introduction

If owning desirable objects bestowed venerable civilisational status, it follows that establishing control over museum collections was essential for India and Pakistan. The scramble over objects, and the articulation of cultural value and meaning ascribed to them, was an integral, if overlooked aspect of implementing partition. It also shaped the national imaginary at a time when the territorial conceptions of India and Pakistan were nascent, tying each nation to the ground from which archaeologists unearthed its antiquities. It explains the tenacity with which Pakistan pursued its case and asserted its rights; for, the share of Indus Valley objects that India claimed (from sites in Pakistan) perversely served to lend weight to its wider civilizational claim over the subcontinent. These assertions, as the previous chapter shows, were also made with global audiences in mind, and 'universalist' ideals at play.

If this was the situation at the national level (enacted in front of an international audience), what happened in partitioned regions? Was it 'natural' for those unmoored by partition to desire the opposite: to search for roots, and a sense of belonging through an established past? This chapter investigates how such individual quests became state projects (in this case of the East Punjab Government) implemented through its archives and museums; and its implications for how the *region* was imagined after 1947. Later chapters will investigate how the region's place was imagined *in the nation and the world* through museum collections.

In so doing, it also addresses a key question in South Asian museum historiography. How did postcolonial museums collect, and what can that tell us about the postcolonial nation-state and its subsidiaries? Barring a handful of studies,[2] existing scholarship on this period has tended to skip over the crucial period between 1947 and

[2] In addition to references in Chapter I in connection with the Royal Academy exhibition and the first displays at the Rashtrapati Bhavan, see Kavita Singh, 'Museums and the Making of the Indian Art Historical Canon' in *Towards a New Art History: Studies in Indian Art* ed. by Shivaji K. Panikkar, Parul D. Mukherji, Deeptha Achar (New Delhi: D. K. Printworld, 2003), pp. 335-357; Giles Tillotson, *A Passionate Eye: Textiles, Paintings, and Sculptures from the Bharany Collections* (Mumbai: Marg Foundation, 2014); Pratapaditya Pal, *In Pursuit of the Past: Collecting Old Art in Modern India, Circa 1875-1950* (Mumbai: Marg Foundation, 2015).

1960, resulting in the popular perception that most collections are a 'dead' colonial inheritance. As this thesis will demonstrate, this was far from the case, at least in Indian Punjab.

The 1947 partition catalysed one of the largest displacements of people known in history, and its aftermath continues in many forms today.[3] It has generated a vast field of scholarship over more than seventy years that has reframed the issues with regularity, and reconsidered sources:[4] classic studies of high politics,[5] the role of regional actors and local motivations,[6] lived experience,[7] and engagement with oral sources.[8] While efforts to scale down to develop richness and detail continue, there are also reminders to scale up:

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[3] Tai Yong Tan and Gyanesh Kudaisya, *The Aftermath of Partition in South Asia* (London: Routledge, 2000); Urvashi Butalia (ed.), *Partition: The Long Shadow* (New Delhi: Zubaan, 2014).
[4] Gyanendra Pandey, *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism, and History in India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Tai Yong Tan and Gyanesh Kudaisya (eds.), *Partition and Post-colonial South Asia: A Reader* (London: Routledge, 2008, 3 vols); Joya Chatterji, 'Partition Studies: Prospects and Pitfalls', *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 73:2 (2014), pp. 309-312; Manan Ahmed Asif, 'Idols in the Archive', *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 73:1 (2014), pp. 9-16.
[5] Asim Roy, 'The High Politics of India's Partition: The Revisionist Perspective', *Modern Asian Studies,* 24:2 (1990), pp. 385-408; Ayesha Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule: The Origins of Pakistan's Political Economy of Defence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).
[6] Ian Copland, 'The Master and the Maharajas: The Sikh Princes and the East Punjab Massacres of 1947', *Modern Asian Studies,* 36:3 (2002), pp. 657-704; Sarah Ansari, *Life After Partition: Migration, Community and Strife in Sindh, 1947-1962* (Karachi; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Joya Chatterji, *The Spoils of Partition: Bengal and India, 1947-1967* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Vazira Zamindar, *The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia: Refugees, Boundaries, Histories* (New York; Chichester: Columbia University Press, 2010); Uttara Shahani, 'Sind and the Partition of India, c. 1927-1952', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cambridge (2019).
[7] Taylor Sherman, William Gould, Sarah Ansari (eds.), *From Subjects to Citizens: Society and the Everyday State in India and Pakistan, 1947-1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Anjali Bhardwaj Datta, 'Rebuilding Lives and Redefining Spaces: Women in Post-colonial Delhi, 1945-1980', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cambridge (2015); Uditi Sen, *Citizen Refugee: Forging the Indian Nation After Partition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Anjali Bhardwaj Datta, "Useful' and 'Earning' Citizens? Gender, State, and the Market in Post-colonial Delhi', *Modern Asian Studies,* 53:6 (2019), pp. 1924-1955; Sarah Ansari and William Gould, *Boundaries of Belonging: Localities, Citizenship and Rights in India and Pakistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).
[8] Urvashi Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition* (New Delhi: Viking, 1998); Ravinder Kaur, *Since 1947: Partition Narratives Among Punjabi Migrants of Delhi* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007); Kavita Puri, *Partition Voices: Untold British Stories* (London: Bloomsbury, 2019); Aanchal Malhotra, *Remnants of a Separation: A History of the Partition Through Material Memory* (Noida: HarperCollins, 2017); 1947partitionarchive.org.

to situate partition globally; reconsider cause and effect and high politics,[9] the politics of minorities and the nature of group violence.[10] Even larger are 'civilizational' questions[11] about the longer history of South Asia, and the importance of conversing with other disciplines.[12] An important contribution of this thesis is therefore to link the disciplines of history, art history, archaeology, and museums to shed new perspectives on the process of partition, and the evolution of citizenship and national identity. Historians of both partition and South Asian museums are yet to ask critical questions of the museum in postcolonial South Asia, in the immediate aftermath of Independence. If colonial museums can tell us something about the colonial state, what can postcolonial museums tell us about the postcolonial nation-state, in a new global reality?

Civilising East Punjab

> 'The preservation of the relics of the past is an essential requirement of all civilised society and a museum thus is a primary cultural need of a progressive society. Not only has every province a museum, but several states like Baroda, Gwalior and Kishengarh and a number a [sic] cities like Allahabad and Benares can boast of owning one. East Punjab must not lag behind.' [13]

So wrote B. C. Mitra, former Gallery Assistant of the Central Museum Lahore, and Officer on Special Duty with the responsibility for packing up East Punjab's share from

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[9] David Gilmartin, 'Partition, Pakistan, and South Asian History: In Search of a Narrative', *The Journal of Asian Studies,* 57:4 (1998), pp. 1068-1095; Yasmin Khan, *The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2007).
[10] Ilyas Chattha, *Partition and Locality: Violence, Migration, and Development in Gujranwala and Sialkot, 1947-1961* (Karachi; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Paul Brass, 'The Partition of India and Retributive Genocide in the Punjab: 1946-47: Means, Methods and Purposes' in *The Independence of India and Pakistan: New Approaches and Reflections* ed. by Ian Talbot (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 15-57.
[11] David Gilmartin, 'The Historiography of India's Partition: Between Civilization and Modernity', *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 74:1 (2015), pp. 23-41.
[12] Joya Chatterji, 'Partition Studies'; also, Francesca Orsini (ed.), *Before the Divide: Hindi and Urdu Literary Culture* (New Delhi: Orient BlackSwan, 2010).
[13] 'Note on the Proposed Museum to be set up in the East Pb', 25/17 48-G, Punjab State Archives, Chandigarh (PDL reference FI-17506).

the Lahore Museum in 1948. Mitra felt the reasons were so obvious that he could 'refrain from expatiating on the need for' a museum in East Punjab and moved on to discussing potential sources that could 'yield a collection of a fairly respectable size at a surprisingly low cost.'[14]

Mortimer Wheeler might have drafted those lines, indicating how widely shared was the sentiment that museums were a civilizational status marker: 'both new nations as well as old ones need ancient pasts'[15] and museums were positioned to cater to this need. They were not just logical repositories for historic materials, but institutions that channelled the power of antiquity to produce legitimacy and authority.[16] East Punjab's urgent need for civilizational credentials (according to Mitra) is the more telling because of the context in which his argument was made: the international bad press that both India and Pakistan received (the Punjab in particular), as a result of the violence which accompanied partition. A desire to redress it by acquiring evidence of culture and putting it on display may well be what drove many of the actors in this story, without their always being aware of it.

Achieving legitimacy through museums might have been a recent notion for Mitra and his colleagues, mediated by the colonial gaze and experience. However, it was not wholly new. Historians of both pre-colonial and colonial India have noted how older cultural forms of affirming authority were appropriated and recycled in support of new regimes. Thus, the newly installed Mughal Emperor Babur visited his Lodhi

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[14] *Ibid.*

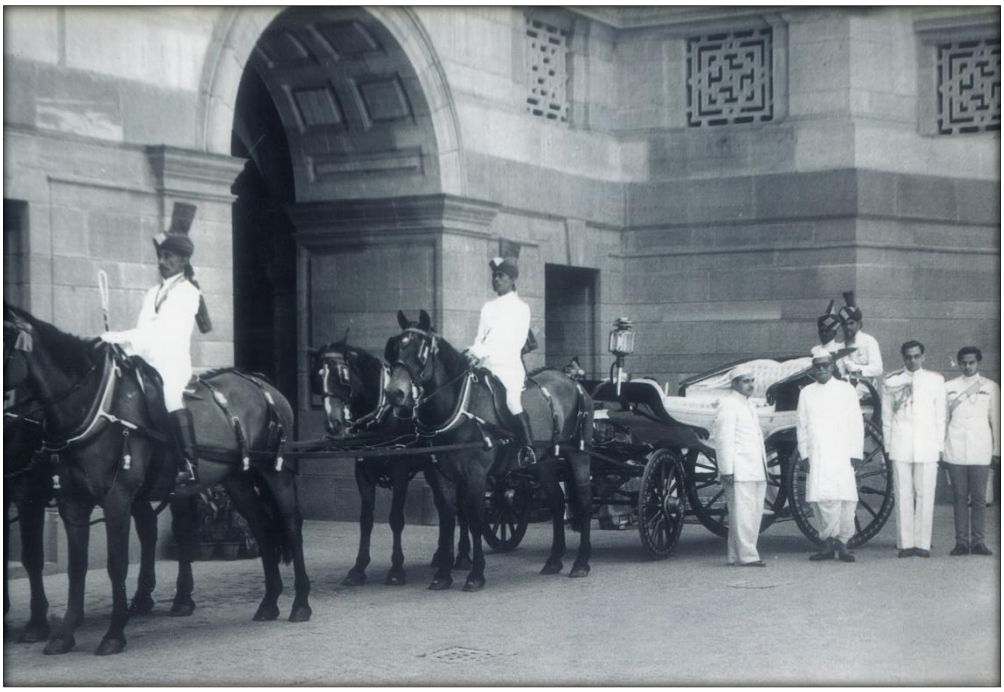
[15] Johnathan R. Gillis, 'Memory and Identity: The History of a Relationship' in *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* ed. by Johnathan R. Gillis (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 9.

[16] Selected references indicating the substantial body of work on the subject from around the world include: Jonathan R. Gillis (ed.), *Commemorations;* Tapati Guha-Thakurta, *Monuments, Objects, Histories: Institutions of Art in Colonial and Postcolonial India* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2004); Fiona McLean, 'Museums and National Identity', *Museum and Society,* 3:1 (2005), pp. 1-4 (the entire issue is dedicated to the subject); Andrew Newman and Fiona McLean, 'The Impact of Museums Upon Identity', *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 12:1 (2006), pp. 49-68; Christine Y. Hahn, 'Unearthing Origins: The Use of Art, Archaeology, and Exhibitions in Creating Korean National Identity, 1945-1962', *Visual Resources: An International Journal of Documentation*, 28:2 (2012), pp. 138-170; Nguyen T. T. Huong, 'Art in the Rotunda: The Cham Collection at the National Museum of Vietnamese History', *Curator: The Museum Journal*, 36:3 (2012), pp. 345-362.

predecessors' tombs, ordering their repair and maintenance.[17] His successors continued this 'tradition'[18] and added others, such as incorporating the Indic concept of *darshan* into their routine: appearing once each day at a designated window, to be glimpsed by their subjects, reinforcing their relationship with them by the mutual act of seeing and being seen. In their turn, the British embraced the ceremony of the formal audience, the spectacle of the royal procession, and the stewardship of India's past through its monuments and antiquities.

The rulers of independent India had two routes open to them, to incorporate significant symbols of sovereignty: adopting and performing the rituals of the Raj (themselves a pastiche of older traditions), and adapting the objects, buildings, persons, and customs of princely India. Iconic images of independent India around 1951 show Dr Rajendra Prasad, India's first President, processing in a carriage of State, reinventing the 'invented' traditions and accoutrements of the Indian state's predecessors, for its own. Others show the young heir to the Jaipur throne, Maharaj Kumar Bhawani Singh, dancing attendance as part of Prasad's bodyguard — a ceremonial role, but nonetheless a charged visual statement. Thus, despite the earthquake that was decolonisation and partition, the symbols that demonstrated sovereignty endured.

[17] Simon Digby, 'The Tomb of Buhlul Lodi', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 38:3 (1975), p. 556.
[18] For this and the following paragraph on 'invented' traditions, see Eric J. Hobsbawm and Terence O. Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).



Figs 3.2 & 3.3: (above) Maharaj Kumar Bhawani Singh of Jaipur stands at extreme right in the rear row; and (below) at extreme right, with President Rajendra Prasad the focus of attention.[19]

[19] Images: © The Private Collection of the Royal Family of Jaipur. Reproduced with permission.

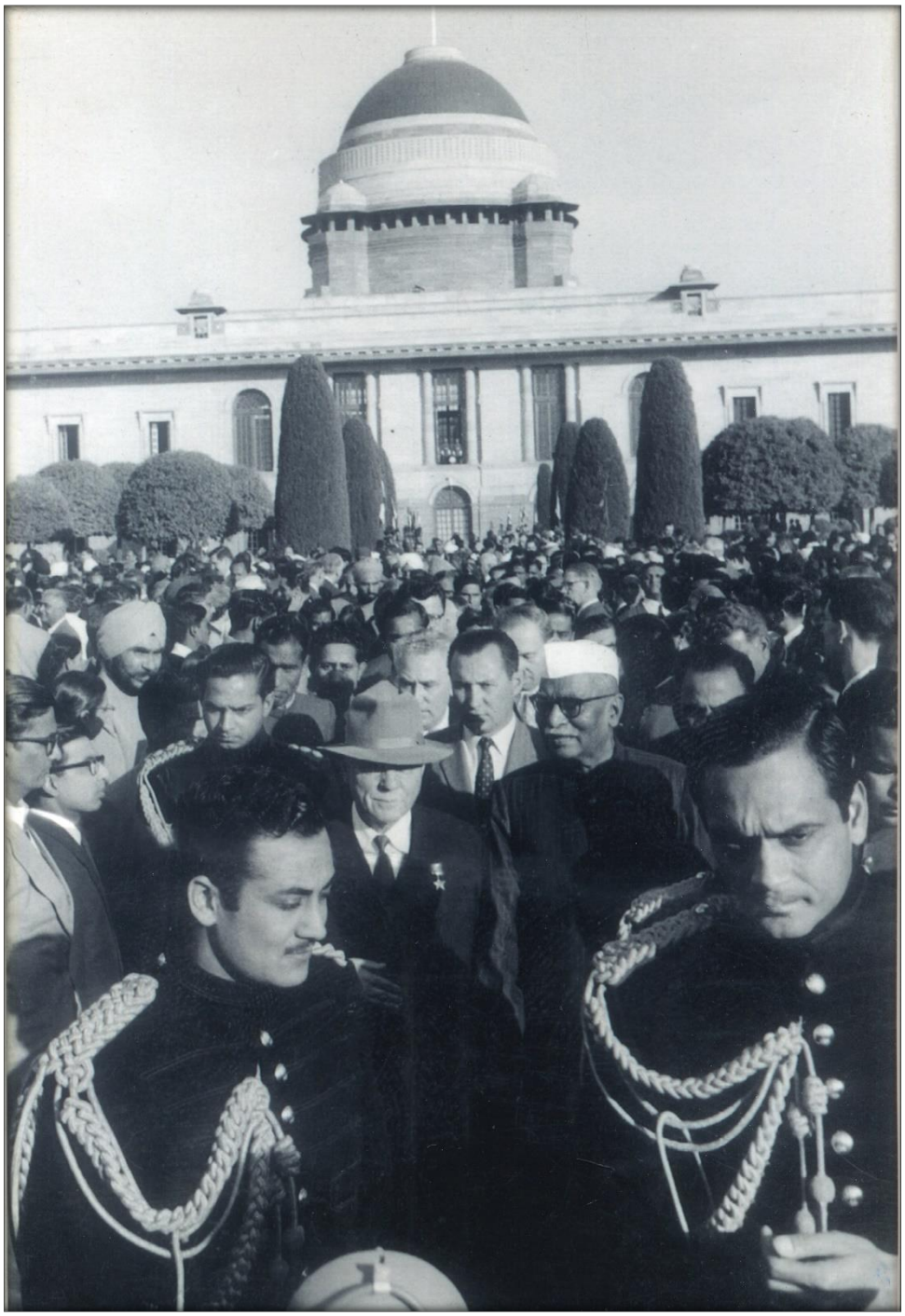


Fig 3.4: Maharaj Kumar Bhawani Singh of Jaipur accompanies President Rajendra Prasad at an event at Rashtrapati Bhavan. He is to the President's right.[20]

[20] Image: © The Private Collection of the Royal Family of Jaipur. Reproduced with permission.

Srirupa Roy argues that 'nation-state formation' is a project enabled by 'recognition for and of the state and its preferred representation of nationhood rather than a project of fostering a new form of community consciousness.'[21] It is the 'habitual' and the 'everyday…encounter' through which the 'identification of the state and its idioms of nationhood takes place'; 'in a variety of ways' with 'varied venues, audiences, and agents'; 'each encounter…attended by different modes of affective address' including 'the "magic" of spectacular displays of state authority'.[22] What better way to achieve recognition of and for the new nation-state than to harness the established rituals and visuals of sovereignty?

In the example above, regardless of the specific source of the carriage (whether from a princely state or inherited from the Viceroy's House Estate), the parade organisers employed the idiom they knew best: the royal procession. The choice of transport channelled *both* princely India and the Raj, and the presence of heirs to ancient thrones attending on Prasad reinforced courtly norms of attendance of political inferiors on superiors. In newly independent India, the subtext would have had instant resonance. In a similar vein, the state taking over custodianship of the past — the traditional purview of rulers, whether princes or colonial officials — at both the regional and national level was one more way to prove its warrant.

That B. C. Mitra articulated a need for tangible remnants of a past heritage, and the legitimacy offered by museums is one thing — he was, after all, tasked with recovering East Punjab's share of the Lahore Museum collection. But that others did so too, in the midst of the trauma of partition is notable. Even more remarkable is the fact that it stayed on the agenda of local government, despite the enormous strain it was under to maintain law and order, effect partition, resolve innumerable related disputes, and address refugee requirements.[23]

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[21] Srirupa Roy, *Beyond Belief: India and the Politics of Postcolonial Nationalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), pp. 18-19.
[22] *Ibid.* For an illustration of this point using archaeology, see Sraman Mukherjee, 'Being and Becoming Indian: The Nation in Archaeology', *South Asian Studies,* 26:2 (2010), pp. 219-234.
[23] V. P. Menon, *Integration of the Indian States* (London: Sangam, 1985); Pallavi Raghavan, 'The Finality of Partition: Bilateral Relations Between India and Pakistan, 1947-1957', PhD thesis, University of Cambridge (2012), recently published as Pallavi Raghavan, *Animosity at Bay: An Alternative History of the India–Pakistan Relationship, 1947-1952* (London: Hurst & Co., 2020).

Mitra lamented the lack of a museum in East Punjab compared to their abundance in princely states. It is possible to read his reference to this as a mere statement of fact (Kipling had, after all, compared the Jaipur museum favourably to all others in British India);[24] but was there perhaps an element of competition? Although the princely states were perceived as both obstacles to and co-architects of independent India,[25] the rhetoric tended to be more critical rather than supportive (the issue of popular government is a case in point).[26] How, Mitra fulminates, could a government by, for and of the people in East Punjab fail to have its own museum, when an 'obviously' despotic — and tiny — princely state like Kishengarh did?

For the museum he hoped to build, Mitra identified two kinds of sources: those of government [such as acquisitions under the Treasure Trove Act (1878);[27] reciprocal exchanges, and surplus distribution of coins and other objects between government museums; free copies of government publications]; and second, private sources that could be gifted or loaned. At the top of his list of government sources were the exhibits sent to the Royal Academy Exhibition from the Central Museum Lahore; and the Harappa and Mohenjo Daro antiquities moved from Lahore to Delhi before partition. Of these, he thought 3,500-4,000 items from each type could be claimed for the East Punjab Museum. Being objects of 'outstanding merit', he indicated that a 'modest

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[24] Rudyard Kipling, *From Sea to Sea: Letters of Travel Part 1* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1907), p. 40.

[25] V. P. Menon quoting Sardar Patel, *Integration*, pp. 487-488.

[26] Examples of less dismissive and more engaged scholarship that cast princely states in a new light include Manu B. Bhagavan, *Sovereign Spheres: Princes, Education and Empire in Colonial India* (Delhi; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Waltraud Ernst and Biswamoy Pati (eds.), *India's Princely States: People, Princes and Colonialism* (Abingdon; New York: Routledge, 2007); Janaki Nair, *Mysore Modern: Rethinking the Region Under Princely Rule* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011); Angma Jhala, *Royal Patronage, Power and Aesthetics in Princely India* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2011); Aya Ikegame, *Princely India Re-imagined: A Historical Anthropology of Mysore From 1799 to the Present* (New York: Routledge, 2013); Teresa Segura-Garcia, 'Baroda, the British Empire and the World, c.1875-1939', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cambridge (2016). Also see C. A. Bayly, 'Patriotism and Political Ethics in Indian History' in *Origins of Nationality in South Asia: Patriotism and Ethical Government in the Making of Modern India* (Delhi; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 1-35; Priya Maholay-Jaradi, *Fashioning a National Art: Baroda's Royal Collection and Art Institutions (1875-1924)* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2016) for other takes on patriotism and nationalism.

[27] Act regarding the ownership of treasure found in the soil, including the rules for acquiring it on behalf of Government, retained by the Government of India after 1947 [https://www.indiaculture.nic.in/sites/default/files/Legislations/9.pdf, accessed 29 April 2020].

estimate' of their value would amount to 'over Rs. 2 lakhs.'[28] In making this suggestion, Mitra was staking a competing claim to these objects: whereas the Government of India sought their return as 'national' heritage, Mitra saw them as key components of a collection for East Punjab.

As a result of the prolonged negotiations over East Punjab's share of the Lahore Museum's collection (discussed in Chapter I), the objects reached Amritsar only by the end of 1949. Their arrival led to much discussion about the space they required, and whether the allotted building should serve as a store, or function as a museum, or both.[29] Since the consensus was that a new museum would be an essential component of a new capital (that was yet to be built), it was decided to make do with temporary arrangements. The Punjab government allocated the top floor of a house called Lal Kothi to Mitra on 23 December 1949.[30] A little less than six months later, in May 1950, East Punjab appointed the Keeper of Government Records, Dr G. L. Chopra, as Curator of the Museum too, paving the way for amalgamating the two institutions under the Historical Records Office at Shimla.[31]

Collecting for East Punjab from Within

On 5 January 1949, Dr G. L. Chopra (then still the Keeper of Records), received two wire communications. The first was from Amritsar, with instructions to postpone his impending visit to Lahore, scheduled to collect East Punjab's share of documents from

[28] 'Note on the Proposed Museum to be set up in the East Pb', pp. 3-4.
[29] 'Temporary Post and Special Allowance for Partitioning the Objects at the Central Museum Lahore', 608, Punjab State Archives, Chandigarh (PDL reference FI-21909). Ambala was first considered more secure, but then rejected because of the greater distance (from Lahore) and thus expense of transportation.
[30] 'Transport of Museum Exhibits from Lahore to Amritsar', 25/11 49-G, *passim* and p. 16, Punjab State Archives, Chandigarh (PDL reference FI-17567).
[31] 'Proposal to Have a Joint Control of the Records Office and the Museum, Special pay to KR for Starting the Nucleus of Museum', 707, Punjab State Archives, Chandigarh (PDL reference Fl-16255).

the Central Record Office.[32] The second was from the Deputy Commissioner of Jullunder 'saying that orders for transferance of a large collection of a muslim evacuee to this office have been issued. [sic]'. [33] He also received news from the Under Secretary (Rehabilitation) about orders 'for transfer to this office of still another collection of a muslim evacuee from Jullundur district'.[34] In consequence, Dr Chopra made speedy arrangements to 'attend to all these matters.'[35]

How and why was this property being transferred to the Record Office? Pakistan and India — West and East Punjab — had both established offices to take custody of evacuee property in September 1947. The original idea was that the Office would hold evacuee property in trust so that their owners could reclaim them. The arrangement reflected official recognition that many people might have temporarily moved to safe locations during the rioting that accompanied partition, rather than with the intention to permanently migrate to the 'other' Dominion. But as scholars have shown, it rapidly morphed into an institution — and subsequently a law — that served to dispossess the very people whose interests it was meant to protect,[36] in addition to bystanders such as overseas Indian Muslims with property in India,[37] or parts of India that had nothing to do with partition but were drawn into its slipstream.[38]

This remains the case, notwithstanding Aishwarya Pandit's demonstration that evacuee property legislation in Uttar Pradesh was more flexible than in East Punjab, and varied from central government policy. She makes a convincing argument for the importance of local factors (notably the Uttar Pradesh economy, and the need to prop up

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[32] Although decided before 15 August 1947, the Punjab Partition Committee and the Arbitral Tribunal worked out the details in stages. It was not until 1949 that Chopra actually collected East Punjab's share, spread over three trips to Lahore. 'A Report on the Progress of the Punjab Historical Records Office during 1948-49', p. 2, File 51, Basta 59, Punjab State Archives, Patiala.
[33] 'Tour Programme of KR', p. 3, File 73, Basta 70, Punjab State Archives, Patiala.
[34] *Ibid.*
[35] *Ibid.*
[36] Joya Chatterji, 'South Asian Histories of Citizenship, 1946-1970', *The Historical Journal,* 55:4 (2012), pp. 1049-1071.
[37] Taylor Sherman, 'Migration, Citizenship, and Belonging in Hyderabad (Deccan), 1946-1956', *Modern Asian Studies* 45:1 (2011), pp. 81-107; Taylor Sherman, *Muslim Belonging in Secular India: Negotiating Citizenship in Postcolonial Hyderabad* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).
[38] Rohit De, 'Evacuee Property and the Management of Economic Life in Postcolonial India' in *The Postcolonial Moment in South and Southeast Asia* ed. by Michael F. Laffan, Nikhil Menon, Gyan Prakash (London; New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018), pp. 87-106.

the market for urban land) in arriving at her conclusions. Nevertheless, she acknowledges that the state government *did* enact legislation that produced the same or similar effects of disenfranchisement and discrimination — it just did so in piecemeal fashion, in part, reflecting a bid for regional autonomy and economic stability.[39]

Evacuee property legislation as a whole has determined the way in which citizenship has come to be defined, especially for religious minorities in South Asia.[40] The sweeping powers and 'curious legal status' of the office of the Custodian of Evacuee Property (it was outside the purview of the judiciary) have cast a long shadow on the larger question of asset redistribution, and certain citizens' right to privacy, occupancy, mobility, movable, and immovable property after independence.[41]

By the time Chopra received his instructions in January 1949, both East and West Punjab had, in competition, enacted amendments to the original legislation. While 'technically' permitting the return of properties (whose definition and scope had also been expanded to include 'cash deposits and the contents of bank lockers' in East Punjab, among other things) to their original owners, in practice it became 'increasingly circumspect'.[42] Meanwhile, evacuee property legislation was extended from the 'disturbed' areas affected by partition to other 'troublesome' areas like Hyderabad. The Evacuee Property Ordinance promulgated on 18 October 1949 was a step up from previous legislation in geographic and legislative scope. It 'effectively nationalised, at a stroke, all property vacated by Muslims in India, outside Bengal, Assam and the north eastern states' and authorised the use of such property for refugee rehabilitation or other 'public purposes'.[43] Requiring only the slightest evidence of a person 'intending' to migrate in order to attach their property, it had far-reaching ramifications, providing the

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[39] Aishwarya Pandit, 'From United Provinces to Uttar Pradesh Heartland Politics 1947-1970', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cambridge (2015), pp. 173-221.
[40] Joya Chatterji, *The Spoils of Partition*; Joya Chatterji, 'South Asian Histories of Citizenship'; Vazira Zamindar, *The Long Partition*; Aishwarya Pandit, 'From United Provinces to Uttar Pradesh'.
[41] Rohit De, 'Evacuee Property', p. 102.
[42] *Ibid.,* p. 92.
[43] Joya Chatterji, 'South Asian Histories of Citizenship', p. 1065. It became the Administration of Evacuee Property Act (1950), enacted on 17 April 1950 [https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b5420.html, accessed 30 April 2020].

means and the precedent for the state to make a direct intervention into its citizens' homes, and over time, shaping 'the Indian state's more quotidian engagements'.[44]

The irony of the Office of the Custodian acquiring and dispersing property that it was, in fact, established to protect is now recognised. However, it emerges that the movable property worth having was not constituted only of cash assets, jewellery, or raw materials and other saleable items (the typical list that appears in diplomatic or legislative correspondence),[45] but objects of cultural value. These objects began to be used to build up Punjab's museum and archive collections.

This was a large-scale operation. Evacuee property was, without shame or hesitation, classed as 'government property' in the Record Office's list of sources. That the East Punjab government was classifying the movable property of Muslim migrants as a government source as early as 1948 is extraordinary. Punjab's Historical Records Office began to acquire it even *before* East Punjab's share of records were collected from Lahore.[46] Within a month, Chopra recorded that the Additional Custodian of Evacuee Property, Jullundur had written of 'a large quantity of historical matter [books and manuscripts]…lying at' Karnal, Kunjpura and Panipat. Chopra's office was asked to examine it 'with a view to bringing a portion of it which might be suitable' and eliminating 'on the spot' those portions deemed irrelevant to the Archives.[47] By the end of 1949, his office had examined 'property at Jullundur, Karnal, Panipat, Rewari, Gurgaon, Amritsar, Ambala, Rohtak and Simla'.[48]

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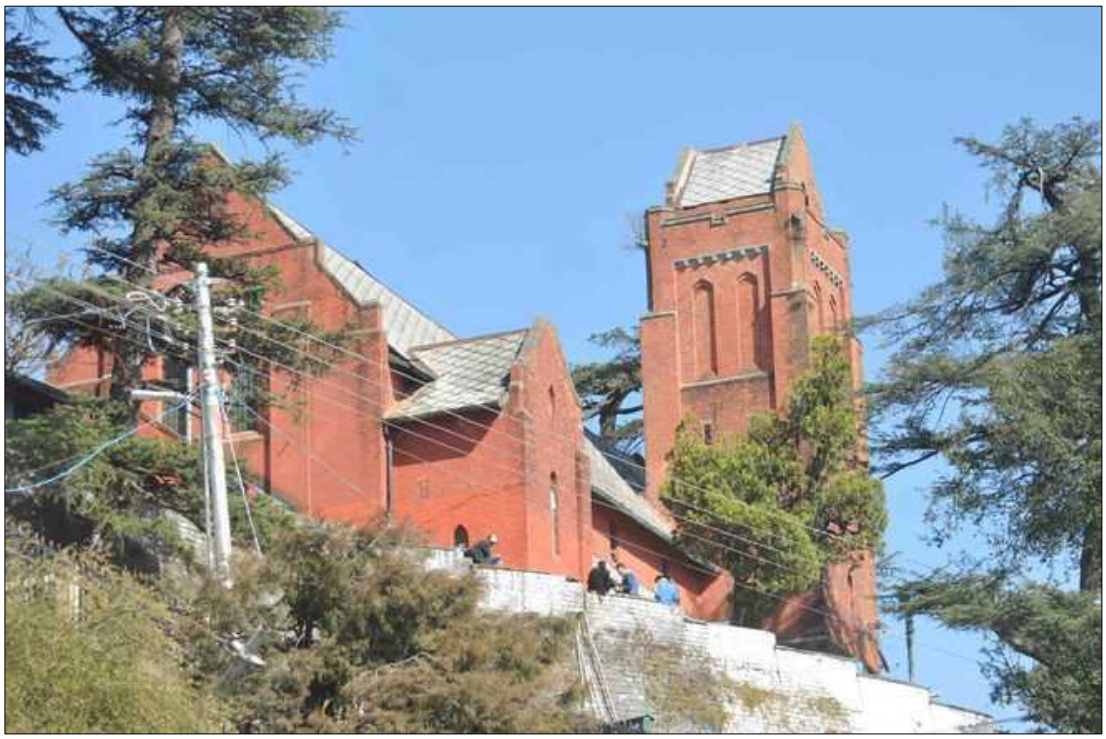
[44] Rohit De, 'Evacuee Property', p. 89.
[45] *Ibid.*; Pallavi Raghavan, 'The Finality of Partition' and *Animosity at Bay*; Joseph Schechtman, 'Evacuee Property in India and Pakistan', *Pacific Affairs* 24:4 (1951), p. 412; Haimanti Roy, *Partitioned Lives: Migrants, Refugees, Citizens in India and Pakistan, 1947-65* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 96.
[46] As mentioned previously, it was not shifted until 1949. 'A Report on the Progress of the Punjab Historical Records Office During 1948-49', p. 2.
[47] G. L Chopra to Chief Secretary, 8 February 1949, 'Tour Programme of KR', p. 7.
[48] 'A Report on the Progress of the Punjab Historical Records Office During 1948-49', p. 3.

Fig 3.5 & 3.6: 'The Manse' was the deconsecrated St Andrew's Kirk (or a part of the complex). Today, it is the Himachal Pradesh University Department of Evening Studies and a news article suggests the building is in poor condition, along with the adjoining 'Manse block'. The sketch (above) gives a sense of the complex and the photograph (below) is more recent.[49]



[49] Images: (above) 'About the Evening Studies' [http://www.hpuniv.ac.in/university-detail/centre-of-evening-studies/about-the-evening-studies, accessed 15 May 2020]; (below) Bhanu P. Lohumi, 'HPU Centre Cries for Help', *The Tribune,* 18 June 2018 [https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/archive/himachal/hpu-centre-cries-for-attention-606903, accessed 15 May 2020].

The East Punjab government had not waited for, or needed, the sweeping powers of the Evacuee Property Ordinance of October 1949. By then, it had already decided — and what is more, implemented — a policy to appropriate evacuee art for 'public purposes'. But it is a revelation that these purposes went beyond the 'recovery of the "economic life" in the province',[50] to encompass the recovery of its historical roots and thus identity.

The rapaciousness of the move is startling. So is the discovery that the East Punjab government considered the consolidation of historical material *as important as* managing the refugee crisis, which was known to be placing enormous strain on the province's personnel and infrastructure.[51] The desire for a deep-rooted and tangible past encompassing objects and records was critical enough to preoccupy both the minds and machinery of government. Historians of modern South Asia have not previously noted this drive, nor probed its manifestations.

Chopra's hectic inspections were a direct result of the Custodian issuing a notice on 5 February 1949, requiring all his subordinates down to the district level, to report on historical material within their remit *in two weeks*:

> 'The Historical Records Office, East Punjab is interested in books, papers and other items of moveable property lying in evacuee stores that may be of historical importance. You may therefore, intimate immediately if you have some books and other such papers in your stores to this office and to the office of the Historical Records, East Punjab, The Manse, Simla, so that a representative of the department may call at your office and inspect the books and the documents. Such of the books and documents that may be of interest to that department, may immediately be transferred to that department and in due course the valuation of the same will be done.'[52]

The instructions leave no room for ambiguity. This was a government-sponsored project, and if further proof were needed, consider the title of the file in which the letter

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[50] Rohit De, 'Evacuee Property', p. 92.
[51] Durga Das (ed.), *Sardar Patel's Correspondence Vol IV* (Ahmedabad: Navjivan Publishing House, 1972), especially Chapters IX, X; V. P. Menon, *Integration*, p. 243.
[52] Copy of letter from the Custodian to all Deputies, dated 5 February 1949, 'Salvaging Objects of Historical Interest from the Belongings of Muslim Evacuees Through out the Punjab', p. 97, File 3, Basta 54, Punjab State Archives, Patiala.

quoted above is archived: 'Salvaging Objects of Historical Interest from the Belongings of Muslim Evacuees Through out [sic] the Punjab'. It is also evident that at least the Custodian and his subordinates understood that 'books, papers' and 'historical' items constituted movable property. It makes their absence in evacuee property studies till date all the more notable.

Despite the Record Office's haste to secure items of potential interest, there were hiccups along the way. Chopra had to stay vigilant — he paid attention to press notices of auctions — to ensure that his Office was not deprived of old coins and other spoils (alternately, 'safeguarding historical objects' as he phrased it).[53] Where was this money going, and who was buying these objects? What kind of material — aside from books, manuscripts, or coins — was being auctioned?

One could speculate that any official monetary gains went towards the 'compensation pool' that the Government of India created by consolidating all Muslim evacuee property, from which it proposed to recompense incoming Hindus and Sikhs. But this arrangement was only formalised in October 1954, through the Displaced Persons (Compensation and Rehabilitation) Act,[54] *a full five years after these events*. Was the Government of East Punjab running its own scheme?

Thus far, scholarly work in the burgeoning field of evacuee property literature has dealt with immovable property in the main. But as much as property and land were a 'cornerstone of refugee rehabilitation and…[creating] the new post-partition order',[55] it emerges that movable evacuee property was no less important.[56] It was more than just a liquid or saleable asset; instead, it provided the foundation on which to rebuild Punjab through cultural rehabilitation; to give it identity and a sense of history rooted in objects, even if places and territories were no longer accessible.

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[53] G. L. Chopra to Sardar Harbans Singh, Deputy Custodian Evacuee Property, 30 August 1949, *Ibid.,* p. 193.
[54] Joya Chatterji, 'South Asian Histories of Citizenship', p. 1066.
[55] *Ibid.*
[56] Movable property does feature in some studies, but not in the current context. See Haimanti Roy, *Partitioned Lives*; Kavita Puri, *Partition Voices;* Aanchal Malhotra, *Remnants of a Separation*.

East Punjab and Evacuee Property

There are many unanswered questions about the imperatives driving the state accumulation of dispersed movable evacuee property at this time. Studies of the lived reality of the border in Bengal,[57] and the varied accounts of the experience of partition can make for harrowing reading, exposing the tremendous gap between an order, and its implementation on the ground. Refugees were often 'made', encouraged by an 'ecology of fear' and 'routine violence' to migrate.[58] Insidious networks of smuggling, corruption, organised crime, and violent militias, were exacerbated by a solidifying border (especially in Punjab) that often resulted in people losing all their possessions before they could reach safety, assuming they did so alive.[59]

Incoming refugees occupied evacuee property with tenacity, and the ferocity with which they fought for their right to remain has been recognised as a key factor that determined the Government of India's decision to prevent Muslim migrants' return — it had 'already lost the argument on the ground' and needed evacuees' homes to house incoming Hindus and Sikhs.[60] This has been described as an example of the ground-up shaping of the rights of citizens, and a failure of the liberal policies and intentions of the two governments.[61] Likewise, across the border in Pakistan, there were too many Muslim refugees for the new nation to absorb, and both countries needed evacuee assets to accommodate new arrivals. Scholars have noted the interrelated nature of evacuee property legislation in India and Pakistan, often characterised as 'tit-for-tat', as the measures grew more draconian and exclusionary.[62]

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[57] Joya Chatterji, 'The Fashioning of a Frontier: The Radcliffe Line and Bengal's Border Landscape, 1947-52', *Modern Asian Studies,* 33:1 (1999), p. 225-241.
[58] Haimanti Roy, *Partitioned Lives,* Chapters III and V.
[59] Ian Copland, 'The Master and the Maharajas'; Sarah Ansari, *Life after Partition*; Lucy P. Chester, *Borders and Conflict in South Asia: The Radcliffe Boundary Commission and the Partition of Punjab* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), especially Chapter VIII; Ilyas Chattha, 'Competitions for Resources: Partition's Evacuee Property and the Sustenance of Corruption in Pakistan', *Modern Asian Studies,* 46:5 (2012), pp. 1182-1211.
[60] Joya Chatterji, 'South Asian Histories of Citizenship', pp. 1063-1064.
[61] *Ibid.,* pp. 1065-67.
[62] Vazira Zamindar, *The Long Partition*; Newal Osman, 'Partition and Punjab Politics, 1937-1955', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cambridge (2013); Ilyas Chattha, *Partition and Locality*; Ilyas

The academic focus on houses and agricultural land (compounded by the loose interpretation of 'movable property'[63]) has led to a lacuna in our understanding of exactly how quite so many books and manuscripts accumulated with the Custodian of Evacuee Property. It seems extraordinary that gangs would have robbed fleeing refugees of books rather than jewellery, or that their victims were carrying them (in preference to more practical or precious items[64]). But we do know that for some refugees, books were a top priority. The Partition Museum in Amritsar, for example, holds in its collection a copy of the *Muraqqa-i-Chughtai* (verses by Mirza Ghalib illustrated by Abdur Rahman Chughtai), which was one of the few precious objects Basant Kishan Khanna, his wife Leelavati and their children carried from Lahore when they fled on 14 August 1947, thinking they would return soon.[65] But refugee accounts seldom specify the possessions that either circumstances or individuals forced them to surrender.[66]

It is of course possible that researchers have not previously thought to ask, or have omitted details in publication, thinking them unimportant.[67] It remains an unanswered question, to which this thesis offers a preliminary response. These acquisitions recast our understanding of the workings of evacuee property legislation and the experiences of 'citizen refugees',[68] and the foundations of regional and national identity. Oral accounts indicate that some people managed to return and retrieve possessions from their abandoned homes, sometimes enabled by faithful friends or because conscientious new occupants preserved them. In fact, the presence of movable personal effects in one's house was one of the few ways through which temporary migrants could attempt to

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Chattha, 'Competitions for Resources'; Rakesh Ankit, 'Junagadh, India, and the Logic of Occupation and Appropriation, 1947-49', *Studies in History,* 34:2 (2018), pp. 109-140.

[63] Haimanti Roy, *Partitioned Lives*, p. 95.

[64] For a sample, including a discussion of the rationale for what people carried see Aanchal Malhotra, *Remnants of a Separation*.

[65] Partition Museum Website [https://www.partitionmuseum.org/museum/refugee-artefacts/#partitionmuseum[gal]/2/, accessed 22 September 2019].

[66] For instance, Ahmad Salim, *Lahore 1947* (New Delhi: India Research Press, 2001). Or Kavita Puri, *Partition Voices*, p. 188.

[67] Guneeta Singh Bhalla, Executive Director of 1947partitionarchive.org told me that people do talk about objects, but it is not a systematically explored avenue. Personal communication, November 2019.

[68] Uditi Sen, *Citizen Refugee.*

prove ownership and challenge (usually without success) requisitions by the governments of India and Pakistan.[69]

In point of fact, India and Pakistan had agreed, by 1953, to allow the duty-free removal of personal and household effects, barring 'machinery or machine parts, merchandise and trade goods, unsown cloth…in excess of personal needs, cattle, cash in excess of permitted quantities, and bullion', all of which could either be reclaimed (requiring a migrant to return) or sold within the country of original residence.[70] But the anti-minority rhetoric that had been building up since partition characterised such attempts as efforts to shift capital, destabilise the economy, and thus 'anti national'. Movable property was 'redefined' and imbued with 'nationality'; 'property, which had hitherto been owned by individuals, now came to be seen as belonging to the nation.'[71] Thus in an ironic twist, while their owners, a human resource, became unwanted evacuees, cultural resources became a coveted asset to rebuild and reassert regional and national identity.

By and large, people moved in a hurry, with no time to pack, or arrange to move their possessions later. But there were also numerous cases of people from the better educated, informed, and wealthier classes, being able to liquidate and transfer their assets to 'safe zones',[72] (providing ammunition for accusations of anti-national intentions). But notwithstanding the fact that it may have chiefly been the poor and illiterate who were left to fend for themselves (or even prevented from moving in the 'national interest'[73]), there was enough material for the Record Office staff to go through. The files in the Punjab Archives at Patiala do not (yet) reveal how large numbers of such objects were funnelled through to them. Recent work on the personal objects that encapsulate partition for refugees, and on the affective nature of partition reiterate the visceral impact

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69 Haimanti Roy, *Partitioned Lives*, Chapter III; Joya Chatterji, 'South Asian Histories of Citizenship'.
70 Haimanti Roy, *Partitioned Lives,* pp. 95-96.
71 *Ibid.*
72 Urvashi Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence*; Ahmad Salim, *Lahore 1947*; Aanchal Malhotra, *Remnants of a Separation*; Vazira Zamindar, *The Long Partition,* pp. 41-42.
73 Uttara Shahani, 'Sind and the Partition of India'.

that objects can and do have.[74] Who, then, were the people or agencies that bid for and acquired the material rejected by the Records Office? What impact did the provenance or physical presence of these objects have? These evocative questions have never been considered but lie outside the scope of this thesis.

Studies of partition and state formation in independent India and Pakistan have noted the significant gaps between central policy and implementation on the ground.[75] Indeed, research suggests broad continuities between colonial and postcolonial regimes, in the gap between 'the disordered character of local reality and the abstract logic of governance'.[76] But this is not a question of one or two individuals making a communally biased decision, contravening government policy. Rather, the chasm between the mandate of a government office (buttressed by inter-governmental agreements), and its implementation, stands exposed. And it was deliberate. None of the files containing this information are marked 'secret'; nor does the tone of communication suggest any view to conceal. Chopra became agitated over auctions of evacuee property after seeing press notices;[77] so it is evident that the information was in the public domain. Further, whilst scholars have noted Pakistan's protests at Indian moves to attach land and houses (and vice versa), no one seems to have fussed about public auctions of movable property. Was it a blatant disregard for orders, and were such auctions held in Pakistan? Was the

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[74] Ananya Jahanara Kabir discusses the role of terracotta or pottery, and of literally rooting oneself to the land in *Partition's Post-Amnesias* (New Delhi: Women Unlimited, 2013); Aanchal Malhotra, *Remnants of a Separation.* In permitting a role for 'embodied' knowledge, by which he means knowledge acquired through the senses, Dipesh Chakrabarty has argued that museums serve 'late democracies' better than archives or history departments. He does not apply the argument to South Asia, but it could be one way of thinking about partition-related objects in Punjab's museums. Dipesh Chakrabarty, 'Museums in Late Democracies', *Humanities Research,* 9:1 (2002), pp. 5-12.

[75] Taylor Sherman, William Gould, Sarah Ansari (eds.), *From Subjects to Citizens*; Aishwarya Pandit, 'From United Provinces to Uttar Pradesh'; Joya Chatterji, 'South Asian Histories of Citizenship', *The Spoils of Partition*; Haimanti Roy, *Partitioned Lives.*

[76] Jon E. Wilson, 'The Domination of Strangers: Time, Emotion and the Making of the Modern State in Colonial India', *Economic & Political Weekly,* 46:30 (2011), p. 52.

[77] 'Salvaging Objects of Historical Interest from the Belongings of Muslim Evacuees Through out the Punjab'.

Custodian taking matters into his own hands (empowered, of course, by the Government of India)?[78]

There is enough evidence to assert that there were mechanisms and rationales in place to collect and manage movable property in far greater numbers and variety than we have hitherto realised. The centrality of evacuee property to shaping both citizens and states in South Asia means that this this a crucial area of research that awaits investigation — we still only know the outlines and are yet to flesh out the details.

The Historical Record Office had amassed 'over half a million files and cases, 4,500 books, 400 manuscripts, 1022 coins and 100 other documents' by the end of 1949, which, the Keeper noted with satisfaction, was 'as good as can be found anywhere in Northern India.'[79] Furthermore, it was 'no longer a repository of merely old Secretariat records but [had] rapidly grown into a central Archive in which all kinds of historical materials, both from official and private sources [were] being received from all over the province and properly preserved.'[80]

The attention to quantities was a way to make the connection with Punjab's past tangible. But it also demonstrated the scale of the yields from evacuee property. For if the old office contained Secretariat records alone, then, given what we now know, Muslim migrants were the source of many of the 'new' books, manuscripts, coins, and documents Chopra listed with quiet satisfaction.

In addition to their personal property being thus appropriated, evacuee individuals were rendered nameless and faceless. Chopra's report dehumanises them by referring to 'the evacuee dumps' that he or his team visited, to select and 'rescue' many important items, which his office later 'suitably preserved'.[81] The list itself, sadly, was absent from the copy of the report I consulted. The overwhelming image is of finding treasures in rubbish heaps, eerily reminiscent of Nazi concentration camps. Nazis officers rooted through the 'garbage' that was the personal possessions and the bodies of their victims to

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[78] Joya Chatterji, 'South Asian Histories of Citizenship', p. 1060; 'Evacuee property was thus made an area of governance outside the rule of law: a true state of exception where executive authority was wholly unchecked.', *Ibid.,* p. 1066.
[79] 'A Report on the Progress of the Punjab Historical Records Office During 1948-49', *passim.*
[80] *Ibid.*
[81] *Ibid.*

find whatever valuables they could claim (heaped in 'dumps'), for the war effort and economic gain[82] — 'public purpose'[83] in another form. But unlike post-World War II attempts to return art collections to their pre-War owners, there was no question of restitution here, even in theory.

Furthermore, few mechanisms acknowledge donors in Indian museums, which makes it even less likely that they will recognise nameless migrants to a 'foreign' land. This discovery has serious ethical repercussions for Indian museum professionals.[84] Any attempts to address it will come up against the problem of how to rationalise evacuee — later 'enemy' — property as foundational to national and regional identity.

However, museums also exemplify the tangible power of objects to forge connections between people; they thus offer possibilities for reconciliation at an individual level with South Asia's troubled history. There are numerous examples from around the world, from Bosnia Herzegovina to Northern Ireland, of museums and art being harnessed towards post-conflict resolution;[85] and it was, as we have already seen, an essential component of UNESCO's mandate for museums (although curatorial and educational approaches to the task have evolved since the 1940s). Its absence in South Asia is glaring.

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[82] I have seen these at Auschwitz/ Oswiecim in person.

[83] Wording of Ordinance No. XXVII of 1949. Joya Chatterji, 'South Asian Histories of Citizenship', p. 1065.

[84] For example, a new gallery (*Alamkara*) about the history of ornament at the National Museum, New Delhi, displays jewellery split at partition, without mentioning their history. I have seen this myself, but also see Sudeshna Guha, 'Heritage and the Curation of the Archaeological Scholarship of India' in V. Selvakumar, S. Hemanth, S. K. Aruni (eds.), *South Asian Archaeology — from the Palaeolithic to the Present: Essays in Honour of Prof K. Paddayya* (forthcoming).

[85] For example, Elizabeth Crooke and Thomas Maguire, *Heritage after Conflict: Northern Ireland* (London: Routledge, 2018), or Tatjana Takseva, 'Building a Culture of Peace and Collective Memory in Post-conflict Bosnia and Herzegovina: Sarajevo's Museum of War Childhood', *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism*, 18:65 (2018), pp. 3-18. Also see Glenn Hooper (ed.), *Heritage at the Interface: Interpretation and Identity* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2018).

East Punjab's 'Other' Sources of Acquisition

Private individuals in East Punjab (Hindu and Sikh) had more agency. Their names appear in the correspondence (even if not in the report summaries). They often warranted their own files, and (it must be emphasised) received compensation for their contribution to the collecting effort. The government mounted a 'vigorous' awareness campaign,

> 'to rouse the people to a sense of importance of historical materials which they might possess. The press, the radio, correspondence with individuals and personal contacts with them — all these and other means of publicity were employed to discover and obtain objects of history'.[86]

Government efforts included advertisements 'in the leading dailies of Northern India' resulting in 'a wide response' with 'several collections of books, manuscripts, paintings and coins' brought to the Department's notice. The Department pursued, persuaded, and negotiated with people to loan or sell. In one case, Chopra went to Delhi to examine 'a very valuable collection of historical relics' owned by a 'Shri Jainarain Singh, P. C. S retired', who had got in touch with the Chief Secretary's office. Singh in turn was 'successful in persuading another gentleman Ch. Hari Singh to show…[Chopra]…his old collection of manuscripts and books', and wrote twice to urge Chopra to return to Delhi for the purpose.[87] Furthermore,

> 'but for the fact that in several cases the prices quoted are too high, the actual intake would have been larger than it has been. Nevertheless two big collections comprising 2220 and 80 objects respectively and a few smaller ones [were] obtained at a total cost of no less than Rs. 40,000/-. These include out of print publications, hitherto unknown manuscript histories, Sanads, Jagirnamas, paintings, coins and statuets. [sic]'[88]

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[86] 'A Report on the Progress of the Punjab Historical Records Office During 1948-49', p. 3.
[87] G. L. Chopra to Chief Secretary, 6 September 1949, 'Salvaging Objects of Historical Interest from the Belongings of Muslim Evacuees Through out the Punjab', p. 41.
[88] 'A Report on the Progress of the Punjab Historical Records Office During 1948-49', p. 3. As an aside, the report does note the time all this took, as collections had to be assessed for authenticity and historical importance. In other words, despite the urgency to acquire, they made the time to select.

One cannot overstate the scale of the effort made in infrastructural and monetary terms. Spending Rupees 40,000 in January 1957[89] would be the equivalent of over three million (Rupees 30 lakhs) today.[90] Eight years previously, in 1949 (when Chopra recorded the above purchases), it would have been worth even more, in today's terms.

That the Punjab and national government spent millions on refugee rehabilitation is well-known, though often downplayed by recipients who, according to Ian Talbot, attribute their subsequent success to their own hard work and resourcefulness.[91] It is instructive to compare the outflow on historic materials (of which the above account is but one of many) with that on refugees. For instance, Talbot notes that Rupees 15 lakhs (1,500,000) was set aside for small grants of Rupees 500 to petty shopkeepers, which would have served 3,000 people.[92] The instance of purchase quoted above represents 2.6% of this fund, representing grants to 80 people. While the overall sums spent on refugee rehabilitation and relief (over 190 million) must have outstripped expenditure on object acquisition (the sums of which must remain speculative in the absence of adequate data), they nevertheless make clear that collecting was a priority of the utmost seriousness for the East Punjab government.[93]

A mere two years after partition, when violence had abated but the demands on the East Punjab government were by no means over, it nevertheless believed in the importance of investing in cultural heritage, over and above what it was able to acquire 'on the cheap' from evacuee sources. The Department's reports attest to this. Describing the wide range of activities undertaken until the end of the 1960s,[94] they make clear not

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[89] The earliest year from which I have been able to find an inflation calculator [https://fxtop.com/en/inflation-calculator.php, accessed 15 September 2019].
[90] Indeed, the government was still spending on acquiring collections in 1959. 'Paintings Purchased', *The Times of India,* 22 October 1959 (ProQuest Historical Newspapers, accessed 23 May 2017).
[91] Ian Talbot, 'Punjabi Refugees' Rehabilitation and the Indian State: Discourses, Denials and Dissonances', in *From Subjects to Citizens* ed. by Taylor Sherman, William Gould, Sarah Ansari.
[92] *Ibid.*, p. 128.
[93] In the 1950s, M. S. Randhawa persuaded the government to set aside an annual acquisition fund for Pahari paintings, with which he began collecting for the proposed Punjab Museum at Chandigarh. See Chapter V of this thesis for further details.
[94] 'Govt of PEPSU, 1949', File 54, Basta 54, Punjab State Archives, Patiala. Despite the title of the file, it contains the monthly reports for 1948-1949. The last report I was able to find is for 1967.

only the labour and tedium that went into running and maintaining an archive but the monies that the state was willing to disburse on collections, infrastructure, and personnel.

Some initiatives came from private individuals and institutions: between 1962 and 1964, the Punjab government supported Professor Kirpal Singh's travel and expenses in the United Kingdom for several months to make microfilm and paper copies of sources in England, some in the India Office Library.[95] He felt it was 'essential' to gather material from all possible sources for Punjab's 'cultural development' and to 'rehabilitate Punjab culturally.'[96] To be sure, it reflects the importance of records (written and printed) to the apparatus of Government,[97] but also harks back to the established idea (referenced throughout this thesis) that custody of the past and the mandate to interpret it, bestowed sovereignty and legitimacy on the present and future of partitioned East Punjab.

The differing attitude to acquisitions from individuals can best be understood by considering the ways in which states or regimes exercise power. Scholars in diverse fields ranging from anthropology to political science, art history, archaeology, and history have unpacked the colonial encounter to demonstrate the rupture, change, and overarching forms of knowledge it created in South Asia. In addition to projecting omniscience and control, a key aspect of the enterprise rendered the colonial subject faceless and nameless: reduced to an illustrative type or a cipher in the enumerative knowledge-gathering, world-shaping projects beloved of the colonial regime; or written out of the collaborative ventures that most undertakings in truth were. Others have uncovered native voices, agency, resistance, and subversion in this story, as well as continuities and adaptations.[98]

Both arguments are valid. The resulting deliberations from what are presented as polemical positions, have served to enrich our understanding of the impact of power, by

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[95] 'Scheme for Bringing Historical Materials from Abroad for Scholars', pp. 25, 27, 161, File Res 6/62-64/65, Basta 86, Punjab State Archives, Patiala.
[96] 'Scheme for Bringing Historical Materials from Abroad for Scholars', p. 9.
[97] Bhavani Raman, *Document Raj: Writing and Scribes in Early Colonial South India* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012); Miles Ogborn, *Indian Ink: Script and Print in the Making of the English East India Company* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 2007).
[98] Scholars from a variety of disciplines have written on these themes. Two classic examples are Nicholas B. Dirks, *The Hollow Crown: Ethnohistory of an Indian Kingdom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); C. A. Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780-1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

opening up a spectrum of possible interpretations. Yet it is the very shape of the debate that makes my point: historians and curators regard the act of naming and crediting native informants as the appropriate way to redress the many erasures of colonial sources. Today, whether it is the Holocaust Museum in Berlin, the Auschwitz/ Oswiecim concentration camp, or collaborative projects with source communities undertaken by the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology at the University of Cambridge, the overwhelming emphasis is on identifying, naming, and therefore acknowledging, individuals.

So not only does the 'long partition'[99] continue, it does so in a in a way we have not yet considered, situated at the heart of the process by which East Punjab sought to reconnect with its roots, heritage, and identity — in tangible form. The state in East Punjab dispossessed and rendered Muslim evacuees 'nameless' by the process of collecting for Punjab after partition, with no conceivable mode of redress. Those forced to donate lost any claim on the culture and history that these objects represented, and their geographical roots or affinities. Preziosi notes that the process of collecting, re-collecting and de-collecting is itself significant; and that they intertwine. There is a deliberate erasure of the previous meanings and functions of objects by the very act of collecting objects,[100] *every time* they are collected. But if this 'normalises' the erasure of evacuee ownership from East Punjab's archival collections as a universal feature of the collecting process, it does not absolve museums and archives of their responsibility to recover collection histories. Peggy Levitt observes:

> 'Claiming to be apolitical caretakers of art is a political choice. Claiming to be anational safeguarders of universal treasures ignores the national history that brought those treasures under the care of the nation to begin with. Not confronting the effect of curatorial or collecting choices, and not acknowledging the consequences of what is displayed and what is absent, of what is talked about and what is silenced, is also a deeply political act.'[101]

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[99] Joya Chatterji, *The Spoils of Partition;* Vazira Zamindar, *The Long Partition.*
[100] Donald Preziosi, 'Myths of Nationality' in *National Museums: New Studies from Around the World* ed. by Simon J. Knell, Peter Aronsson, Anne B. Amundsen, Amy J. Barnes, Stuart Burch, Jennifer Carter, Vivianne Gosselin, Sarah A. Hughes, Alan Kirwan (London; New York: Routledge, 2011), p. 59.
[101] Peggy Levitt, *Artefacts and Allegiances: How Museums Put the Nation and the World on Display* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015), p. 140.

'We live in an age of apology and recrimination,'[102] Thomas Berger notes, in which previously victimised or marginalised groups have come to demand — if not always with success, but with more visibility — redressal for past wrongs in various ways, ranging from public apologies to compensation, or reparations. In his analysis of the 'effects of historical memory on the political affairs of nations',[103] Berger compares Germany, Austria, and Japan, to examine how they have dealt with the legacy of their role in the Second World War. What, he asks explains, 'whether a particular country chooses to apologise or not…for past actions, what types of measures are taken to redress wrongs, and whether an effort is made to examine the darker sides of a nation's history or to glorify it instead'?[104] In his analysis, the central role available to historic objects is noteworthy: not only do they 'encode' memories, allowing them to be shared; but also, 'exposure to cultural artifacts carrying different memories and that are based in historical facts can lead to a shift in the collective memory over time.'[105] Despite their failings, museums retain their power and potential to effect positive change.[106]

Significant shifts have occurred in museum practice and international legislation to accommodate the debate on the ownership and restitution of cultural property, producing diverse scenarios.[107] In South Asia, in the colonial context, 'cultural' (much of it archaeological and courtly) and 'ethnographic' categories of objects were the ones that left the subcontinent. Typical demands for restitution and repatriation from India focus on the former — the sword of Tipu Sultan, and the Kohinoor diamond to name two famous examples. 'Ethnographic' objects receive far less public and government

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[102] Thomas U. Berger, *War, Guilt, and World Politics after World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 8.
[103] *Ibid.,* p. 1.
[104] *Ibid.,* p. 30.
[105] *Ibid.,* p. 31.
[106] This has been described as the 'optimistic' perspective on exhibiting culture, coexisting and in a productive tension with the 'critical'. Shelley Ruth Butler, 'The Politics of Exhibiting Culture: Legacies and Possibilities', *Museum Anthropology,* 23:3 (2000), pp. 74-92.
[107] Selected examples include Louise Tythacott and Kostas Arvanitis (eds.), *Museums and Restitution: New Practices, New Approaches* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), especially the Introduction for a summary of the current status; Brigitta Hauser-Schäublin and Lyndel V. Prott (eds.), *Cultural Property and Contested Ownership: the Trafficking of Artefacts and the Quest for Restitution* (London; New York: Routledge, 2016). See Jeanette Greenfield, *The Return of Cultural Treasures* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) and compare the prefaces to the three editions (it was first published in 1989).

attention as 'lower' value objects in comparison, and requests tend to be made directly from source communities to holding institutions.[108] It is largely (though not exclusively) 'ethnographic' collections (which include human remains), by contrast, that are at the centre of the international storm over decolonising museums, and the question of returning looted or illegally procured collections.

In response, museums, national governments where applicable, and international bodies like the United Nations have evolved a range of strategies: from digging their heels in; to acknowledging difficult histories and initiating belated research projects to uncover provenance; enacting legislation or international agreements on cultural property; facilitating long-term loans; and finding creative ways to enable restitution, including the use of digital technology. There are challenges and complications, such as the question of who is authorised to speak for whom, and who the stakeholders in such situations are. These matters are the mere tip of the iceberg: not only is this a cursory review of a large and complex issue, it is a live one which museums, their publics and their governments are in the midst of shaping; a debate that we do not yet know the outcome of.

Yet whilst there is a substantial — and growing — body of work in the museum, heritage and culture fields on why historic erasures were significant and how museums have or could address them,[109] no study of South Asian museums considers the role of the postcolonial nation *itself* in such matters. I argue that the objects unmoored by partition and collected for East Punjab's museums constitute a third, even 'postcolonial' category of objects that *the state and its apparatus* dispersed in the process of nation-making. Given the significant legal resources that both India and Pakistan have invested over the years in shoring up their claims over evacuee property, it is unlikely that Indian museums will ever acknowledge such objects as illegal acquisitions. But the evidence

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[108] Dr Mark Elliott, personal communication, February 2018. Also see Sudeshna Guha, 'Heritage', for a comment on this.

[109] To cite one example, Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established to investigate the legacy of Canada's Indian residential schools. It resulted in several detailed reports and findings, but also Calls to Action, some of which were specifically aimed at museums and archives and called upon them to make visible and safeguard this history [http://nctr.ca/, accessed 10 October 2019].

shows that they were *unethical*. Recent efforts by partition survivors and their descendants to recover and record the varied experiences of that 'long' moment have demonstrated the catharsis it can afford. So, although 'at times it may make sense' to seek closure over shared historical events, and at others, prove 'impossible or too costly to do so,'[110] the museum collections of East Punjab continue to offer real possibility, and hope, for reconciliation.

Collecting for East Punjab from Elsewhere

Although it reflects the importance of records to the apparatus of Government, what else might explain the urge to collect and archive? One motivation might be the 'fiercely acquisitive' nature of national identity, and contesting claims over icons or markers of heritage shared with others.[111] An exhibition constitutes a political arena in which to assert and contest definitions of identity and culture, and art museums perform ceremonial and ritual functions.[112] Simon Knell, in a similar vein, has commented on how museums constitute a space for performing the myths of nationhood, made 'so much more believable' because we see 'real' and 'authentic' objects in front of us, 'not merely props'.[113] For East Punjab's existence to be real, then, and the logic of partition and nationhood to be believable, it *needed* to collect.

Studies of the evolution of citizenship in South Asia have demonstrated that it has resulted from a process of dialogue between the state and its citizens — if Vazira Zamindar 'insists' that it was top-down, Ornit Shani and Joya Chatterji make convincing cases for the individual and group efforts that exerted pressure in the opposite direction,

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110 Thomas Berger, *War, Guilt, and World Politics,* p. 4.
111 David Lowenthal, 'Identity, Heritage and History' in *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* ed. by Johnathan R. Gillis (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 49. For examples of the different, sometimes clashing interpretations of heritage see Glenn Hooper (ed.), *Heritage at the Interface*.
112 Ivan Karp, 'Introduction' and Carol Duncan 'Art Museums and the Ritual of Citizenship' in *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display* ed. by Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine (Washington, D. C.; London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), pp. 1-18, 83-103.
113 Simon J. Knell *et al*, *National Museums*, p. 4.

thereby shaping democratic institutions and legislation from below.[114] Others have demonstrated how the mechanisms of governance and their implementation mediated individual experiences of the state, and the rights and duties of citizens.[115]

There is also convincing evidence of the 'many nationalisms'[116] that existed prior to partition and independence in 1947 and for many years after it (such as in the princely states[117]), which offered a different conception of what the nation could be. When considered in conjunction with the language of national importance and patriotic duty that the Record Office deployed when writing to potential donors, it becomes possible to see that the process of participating in collection-building offered a way in which to articulate one's citizenship, affirm belonging, and imagine the nation. Conversely, using nameless evacuee property for collection-building was an act of disenfranchisement: denying citizenship, belonging and the right to imagine the nation.

A template letter dated March 1948 from Chopra[118] provides an adequate example of these processes at work:

> 'I am directed to invite your very kind attention to a matter of our national concern. As you are aware the old Punjab Historical Records Office with its museum, situated in Anarkali's Tomb has been left behind in Lahore. It is very doubtful if our East Punjab Government will get any share of the contents of that Archive, but our government have decided to build up denovo a historical archive in Simla worthy of our cultural heritage.'[119]

The letter went on to detail the 'uphill task' that this constituted, listed what kind of material was being sought, and claimed the 'active help' of the addressee. The 'Keeper

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[114] Vazira Zamindar, *The Long Partition*; Joya Chatterji 'South Asian Histories of Citizenship'; Ornit Shani, *How India Became Democratic: Citizenship and the Making of the Universal Franchise* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Rohit De, *A People's Constitution: The Everyday Life of Law in the Indian Republic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019).
[115] Taylor Sherman, William Gould, Sarah Ansari (eds.), *From Subjects to Citizens*; Rohit De, 'Evacuee Property'.
[116] Joya Chatterji, 'Nationalisms in India, 1857-1947' in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Nationalism* ed. by John Breuilly (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) pp. 242-264.
[117] I will address them later in this chapter, and in further detail in Chapter IV.
[118] I presume Chopra is the writer, simply printed as 'Keeper Records'.
[119] 'Collection of Historical Material from E Panjab State, 1948', p. 1, File 52, Basta 70, Punjab State Archives, Patiala.

Records' hoped that their 'fine national and cultural sense' would help them 'appreciate the nature of [the] endeavour' and concede to his request to at least copy materials.[120]

Chopra cast the net far and wide, seeking catch of all sizes. He enlisted the help of the Commissioner of Himachal Pradesh, N. C. Mehta, and E. Penderel Moon, his Deputy,[121] to help bring 'the needs of this office to the notice of' former rulers, 'the Chiefs and leading men of Himachal Pradesh' by using their personal influence.[122] Here then, is the next twist in the tale. Not only were 'ordinary' individuals (however notable in society, and 'fine' their 'national and cultural sense') being invited to participate in this ritual of citizenship-through-collecting, but so were the Indian princes, who were a 'problem'[123] for the nationalist movement and subsequently the national government of India to solve. The next chapter deals with the question of the region's princes as a source of museum collections, and its implications. For the moment, I will restrict myself to speculating on what Chopra thought he was doing, and why.

When visiting Dharamsala, capital of the Kangra district, Chopra asked the editors of local papers to publicise Government's ongoing survey, and noted particular princely families (Kangra-Lambagraon, Guler, and Nurpur[124]) that his department could connect with through prominent locals. Gifts of 'old paintings, pictures, coins, sanads, manuscript, accounts, books, weapons and in fact all kinds of relics of bye-gone days, which are of historical interest generally' were ideal, though they could also consider purchase.[125] In 1948, Chopra did not know that the paintings from this region — collectively referred to as 'pahari' or of the hills — would, within two decades, become the most celebrated expression of 'authentically' Indian art; a position from which it has yet to be dislodged. Nor did he know that the Kangra Valley would cease to be a part of

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120 *Ibid.*
121 N. C. Mehta was then Chief Commissioner of Himachal Pradesh and a notable collector (some would say appropriator) of art, especially of the hills. E. P Moon was his Deputy.
122 G. L. Chopra to E. P. Moon, 30 September 1948, 'Collection of Historical Material from E Panjab State, 1948'.
123 Ministry of States, *White Paper on Indian States* (New Delhi: Government of India, 1950), p. 7.
124 'Tour Report of KR 1948', File 83, Basta 70, Punjab State Archives, Patiala. Although he mixed things up a little. The Katoch family ruled from Kangra and was later pensioned off at Lambagraon by Maharaja Ranjit Singh; Nurpur was ruled by Pathanias. Both were annexed to British India at different times.
125 'Collection of Historical Material from E Panjab State, 1948', p. 9.

Indian Punjab. One can surmise that his success rate was not very high, as the painting collections of these princely families were acquired only later for the National and Chandigarh museums, a subject to which I will return in subsequent chapters.

In 1947, the Punjab Hill States consisted of twenty-one minor states and their feudatories, totalling about 11,000 square miles, a population of a little over a million, with an annual revenue approaching 8.5 million rupees.[126] In April 1948, the Government of India consolidated them to form Himachal Pradesh, rejecting demands for a merger with East Punjab. The latter was a suggestion which V. P. Menon (who assisted Sardar Patel with integrating the Indian states) reported as having,

> 'met with vehement opposition from the rulers as well as the people…their contention was…that the people of these hilly areas were quite different in point of stock, manners, customs and language from the people of the plains of the Punjab.'[127]

The Central government placed Himachal Pradesh under its direct control through a Chief Commissioner; the rationale was that it was only the Government of India that could provide the level of investment that the area required to develop, and the people demanded. However, the case of the princely state of Bilaspur (the site of the Bhakhra-Nangal dam over which the Government of India needed direct control) shows that such decisions were strategic and not based on local demands alone.[128]

Although referred to as the 'Punjab' Hill States, relations between the hills and the plains — i.e. Punjab proper — had a volatile history. The Sikh Maharaja Ranjit Singh, who had conquered Lahore in 1799 and proclaimed himself Maharaja in 1801, was able to intervene in the politics of the hills when Raja Sansar Chand of Kangra — scion of the Katoch family, which claims to be the oldest ruling family in the subcontinent — sought his assistance in defeating an alliance of hill rulers and Gurkhas from the neighbouring kingdom of Nepal. Ranjit Singh succeeded in his mission, but extracted a heavy price: the

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126 V. P. Menon, *Integration*, p. 296; Ministry of States, *White Paper*, pp. 46-47.
127 V. P. Menon, *Integration*, pp. 297-298.
128 *Ibid.,* pp. 297-300; Louise Tillin, *Remapping India: New States and their Political Origins* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2013). Also see Uttara Shahani, 'Sind and the Partition of India', pp. 273-280 on land granted by the Maharao of Kutch to refugees, later acquired for Kandla port by the Government of India.

Kangra Valley. He also pensioned off Sansar Chand with the Lambagraon estates, and married two of the Katoch ruler's daughters to cement the alliance. In this way, the Kangra Valley became a part of Ranjit Singh's Punjab,[129] and remained an administrative part of East Punjab until 1966, when the Government of India awarded it to Himachal Pradesh.

Arik Moran has deconstructed the process by which the small group of ruling families of the hill states of the Western Himalayas became iconic symbols of an unadulterated Hindu India, as 'South Asian societies' were re-formed 'along formats now considered "traditional"'.[130] He traces it to the documentary demands of the early colonial encounter, especially the East India Company's expansionist phase from c. 1818-1858, which resulted in a range of transformations. One, he suggests, was that the earlier fluid social practice of 'patronizing Pahari traditions in their home environments and approximating Rajput nobles' in their external relations, enabled hill rulers to position themselves in the eyes of their English overlords as the 'last bastion of "high (plains-based) culture" in a bid to curry favour'.[131]

This is a well-established academic domain. Scholars have explored the contrasting scenarios that unfolded as a result of the colonial encounter. While the need to master a bewildering new society led to an emphasis on documentation for the British, the act of recording gave the information therein the status of empirical fact. Conversely, the new market for information generated a demand for the appropriate 'products'. A prime example is the invented genealogy or *vamshavali* that elevated credentials and reaffirmed local roots and sovereignty, ensuring that it was only the most favourable, status-reaffirming 'facts' that were recorded.[132]

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[129] Ownership passed to the East India Company when the Sikhs ceded the area to the British after the First Anglo-Sikh War in 1846.
[130] Arik Moran, *Kingship and Polity on the Himalayan Borderland* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2019), p. 16.
[131] *Ibid.,* p. 22.
[132] *Ibid.;* Ann Murphy, *The Materiality of the Past: History and Representation in Sikh Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012). Dr Norbert Peabody makes the point that this process took place in Rajasthan even earlier, in the sixteenth century in response to the Mughals (Personal communication, September 2019). Also see Norbert Peabody, 'Knowledge Formation in Colonial India' in *India and the British Empire* ed. by Douglas M. Peers and Nandini Gooptu (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 75-99.

By comparing local accounts of historical events against correspondence of the rulers with the East India Company, Moran shows that there are in fact,

> 'formidable gaps between mountain kings' lived experiences and their later representations. The alterations introduced into the memory of these formative decades reveals the conscious efforts of regional elites at reshaping their immediate pasts.'[133]

The project appears to have gone into overdrive once the Western Himalayas became enfolded into British domains (rather than during its earlier status as a frontier) which injected the process with a greater sense of opportunity. It became possible to explore the region systematically: 'the identification of the Pahari elite with Indic civilization grew with the discovery of every document, fort and temple'. In due course it was 'enshrined' in 'a master narrative entitled *History of the Panjab Hill States*[134]…that remains the authoritative account of West Himalayan history to date.'[135]

[133] Arik Moran, *Kingship and Polity,* p. 21.
[134] The reference is to John Hutchinson and Jean P. Vogel, *History of the Panjab Hill States* (Lahore: Superintendent Government Printing, 1933, 2 vols).
[135] Arik Moran, *Kingship and Polity,* p. 21.

Figs 3.7 & 3.8: (above) The remains of Kangra fort at top left, and the sheer drop to the river below it. It was severely damaged during the earthquake of 1905. (below) Much of the fort remains in ruins, although the approach and supporting walls have been rebuilt.[136]

[136] Images: Author.

Fig 3.9: View of the Kangra Valley from the fort. The Kangra family still owns the fort and runs a small museum adjacent to it, which celebrates the patronage of Sansar Chand and the family legacy.[137]

[137] Image: Author.

Moran sets out to unpick and unpack this, but what is more relevant to this thesis are his insights on the seminal place and role of Maharaja Sansar Chand in the historiographies of the region. Sansar Chand had an 'Icarian' career, earning renown for reclaiming his kingdom from interlopers (first the Mughals, then the Afghans). But his peers later loathed him because of his rapacity in annexing their kingdoms. It soon brought about his downfall, as it forced him to seek an alliance with Ranjit Singh of Lahore against his vengeful neighbours. And yet, he is celebrated in Himachal Pradesh today for his cultural accomplishments, chief among them his patronage of painting. His story provides 'the classic point of departure into any discussion of the area's modern history' because it encapsulates the major political changes of the period, making the transformation from sovereign rulers to subjects of a foreign empire intelligible.[138] But in addition, it conveys 'a greatness…inherent to all West Himalayan Rajputs'; he was a 'paragon of kingship' and a 'ruler to emulate' as long as 'the moral of his story [solidarity among the Rajputs] was learnt'.[139]

The hills' positive identification with Hindu Rajput culture and Sansar Chand's pre-eminence would cast a long shadow that influenced the subsequent discourse on Pahari painting as we shall see in subsequent chapters. More to the point here, is the impact of these ideas on competing imaginations of the region. Yes, the Kangra Valley was administratively a part of East Punjab. But at a time when religious conceptions of identity were paramount (notwithstanding India's official secular status), it is no surprise that the Keeper of Records of East Punjab sought material from what had come to be seen as the 'last bastion' of an 'essential' India and was simultaneously a part of Ranjit Singh's Punjab. Conversely, it explains why the residents of Kangra, and the wider hill region saw in the creation of Himachal Pradesh, an opportunity to retrieve and reassert an independent identity.

138 Arik Moran, *Kingship and Polity,* p. 65.
139 *Ibid.*

Fig 3.10 & 3.11: (below) The many-pillared hall at Sansar Chand's alternate capital of Tira Sujanpur (also called Sujanpur Tira); (above) and the view from its ruined interior. Popular legend has it that Sansar Chand required his vassals to attend him here, at the height of his power. The fort still belongs to the family.[140]

[140] Images: Author.

Among the areas considered to constitute 'Greater Punjab', the princely state of Jammu & Kashmir was also important, because it had, until recently, formed part of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's domains.[141] In imagining and claiming a legacy for East Punjab that embraced both Kashmir and the Western Himalayas, therefore, Chopra's thinking was shaped by 'which particular geographies — real and imaginary — were significant' to him.[142] For him and his department, what stood out was 'the histories of Punjab and Kashmir which throughout the nineteenth century were so closely inter-linked' relating to which there were 'heaps of Persian materials' in the Kashmir State Archives. It thus became essential to tap this source in order to 'raise our East Punjab Historical Archive to a standard worthy of our historical past.'[143]

Chopra was anxious to explore the Persian collections, being uncertain whether the Lahore records would 'be examined in any reasonable period of time or even preserved by the West Punjab Government'. [144] He expressed distrust of the Kashmir Government's ability to appreciate 'the historical worth of such Persian materials as are in their custody and [whether they] propose[d] to preserve the same.' He was also concerned 'that in the changing set up of Kashmir administration [under Sheikh Abdullah] these might be dispersed and in certain contingency possibly go to the other Dominion and be irretrievably lost to us.'[145] Chopra thus built his case by casting doubts on both the West Punjab and Kashmir governments' intentions and their ability to care for records, highlighting the potential catastrophe of yet another loss across the border.

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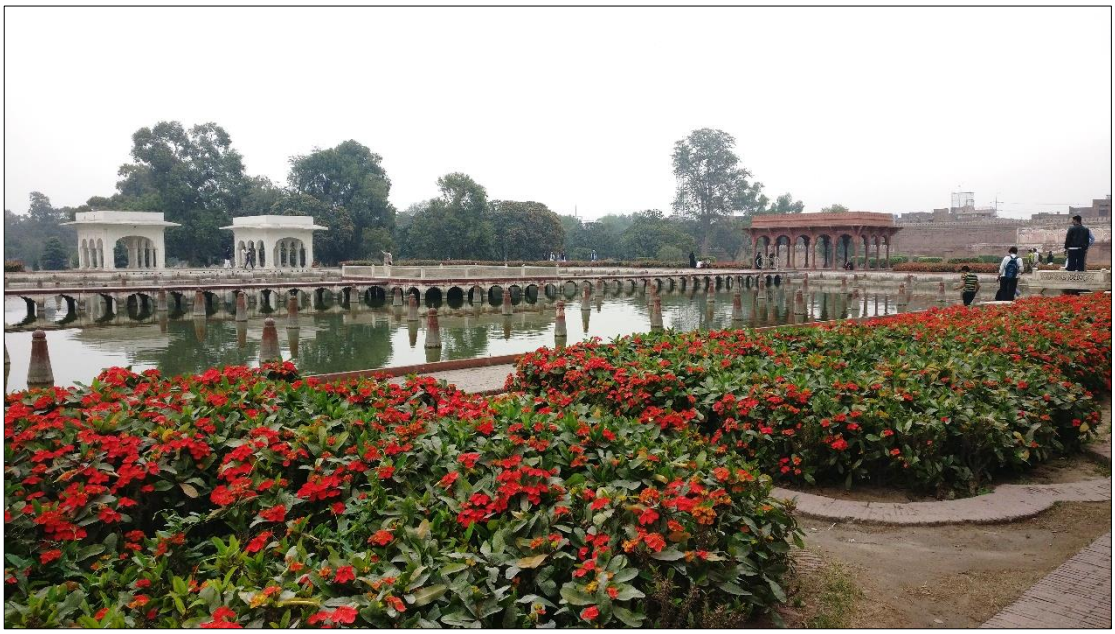
[141] Ranjit Singh only added Kashmir to his territories in 1819, and it became an independent princely state less than thirty years later, welding together disparate areas. Alastair Lamb, *Kashmir: A Disputed Legacy* (Hertfordshire: Roxford Books, 1991), p. 7-14; Alastair Lamb, *Incomplete Partition: The Genesis of the Kashmir Dispute* (Hertingfordbury: Roxford Books, 1997) reviewed the situation on the fiftieth anniversary of partition; Victoria Schofield, *Kashmir in Conflict: India, Pakistan and the Unending War* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2010), p. 5-10.

[142] Francesca Orsini, 'The Multilingual Local in World Literature', *Comparative Literature,* 67:4 (2015), p. 346.

[143] Harnam Singh, Advocate General, to M. R. Sachdev, Chief Secretary to Government, East Punjab, 2 March 1948, 'Collection of Material of Historical Interest from E Panjab State-Kashmir State 1948', p. 6. It was not a misplaced anxiety as the Kashmir Government subsequently abolished the Department of Museums and Research, handing over historic buildings to the Public Works Department, and amalgamating collections with public libraries. *Ibid.,* p. 4.

[144] 'Collection of Material of Historical Interest from E Panjab State-Kashmir State 1948', p. 13.

[145] *Ibid.*



Figs 3.12 & 3.13: (above) Shalimar Bagh (garden) Srinagar, Kashmir; and (below) Lahore, West Punjab, an aspect, or example of how geographies may be 'imagined'.[146]

[146] Images: Author.

> Anne Murphy has explored the 'rich meanings of Sikh objects', through which, 'the past is experienced and proved, and history narrated and performed for a transnational religious community, within a religious setting as well as cultural, artistic and political ones.'[147]

What they seek to connect with is the past that is linked to the ten Sikh Gurus and other revered persons. In that sense, both objects and the gurudwara (meaning, 'doorway to the Guru', and 'another form of materialising the Sikh past') function as 'memorial technologies to recuperate the past.'[148] Her wide-ranging analysis investigates Sikh notions of history and historiography, also making the point that the compulsions of the colonial encounter stimulated novel forms of historical memory — in this case, the preoccupations of the Gurudwara Reform Movement, which required that 'Sikhness and history had to be proven and directly related to land'.[149] In her endeavour to 'explore the formation of the Sikh community through the commemoration of the past and the construction of a historical consciousness out of a range of memorial forms',[150] she focuses on the 'marking of Sikh territory, based on the past.'[151] It led to 'land [being] turned into territory…[by being] inhabited, appropriated, or recognised in some form.'[152]

Although Murphy establishes the existence of a Sikh sense of territoriality over undivided Punjab, she does not definitively cover Maharaja Ranjit Singh's empire in her analysis — or indeed, the other Sikh kingdoms of the Punjab. Combining the roles of 'secular' sovereign and leader of the 'Sikhs' (as did others such as Patiala), it is possible to see that the temporal and spiritual might have blurred in the exercise of Ranjit Singh's kingship. I speculate that what Murphy characterises as a special Sikh notion of territoriality, could spill over to influence how many Punjabis related to the land,[153] and

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147 Anne Murphy, *The Materiality of the Past,* p. 5.
148 *Ibid.*
149 Anne Murphy, *The Materiality of the Past,* p. 248.
150 *Ibid.,* pp. 7-9.
151 *Ibid.,* p. 251.
152 Ian J. Barrow, *Mapping History, Drawing Territory: British Mapping in India, c.1756-1905* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 13, cited in *Ibid.*
153 On how the public sphere was constructed in colonial Punjab, structured as religious vs secular, see Ann Murphy, 'Defining the Religious and the Political', *Sikh Formations*, 9:1 (2013), pp. 51-62.

how they imagined their territory, augmented by the bond of a shared Punjabi language.[154] Murphy also notes the secondary role and importance of historical objects, since they 'escaped some of the pressures put upon the site as the embodiment of the historical'[155] (being regarded as personal property), and only recently beginning to attract attention for their historical worth and value as 'memorial technologies'. But if Sikhness — and maybe, by extension, Punjabiness — was so intimately entwined with 'territorialised place',[156] I suggest that historical objects gained value earlier, *in response to* the violent sundering and wrenching away from territory occasioned by partition. East Punjab, then, may have been especially fertile ground for collecting. If, as Murphy further suggests, the 'territorialised landscape of the Sikh past created was…a museumised space, produced for consumption of the land', demonstrated by the gurudwara guides' 'tour-museum sensibility', and the phenomenon of the 'historical museum' in gurudwaras,[157] East Punjab had also been 'prepped' to 'need' a museum in a unique way.

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[154] It retains its power today and can contribute to improving relations between the two Punjabs. See Alyssa Ayres, 'Language, the Nation and Symbolic Capital: The Case of Punjab', *The Journal of Asian Studies,* 27:3 (2008), pp. 917-946.
[155] Anne Murphy, *The Materiality of the Past,* p. 248.
[156] *Ibid.*
[157] *Ibid.,* p. 256.

IV

MUSEUMS AND THE PUNJAB PRINCELY STATES

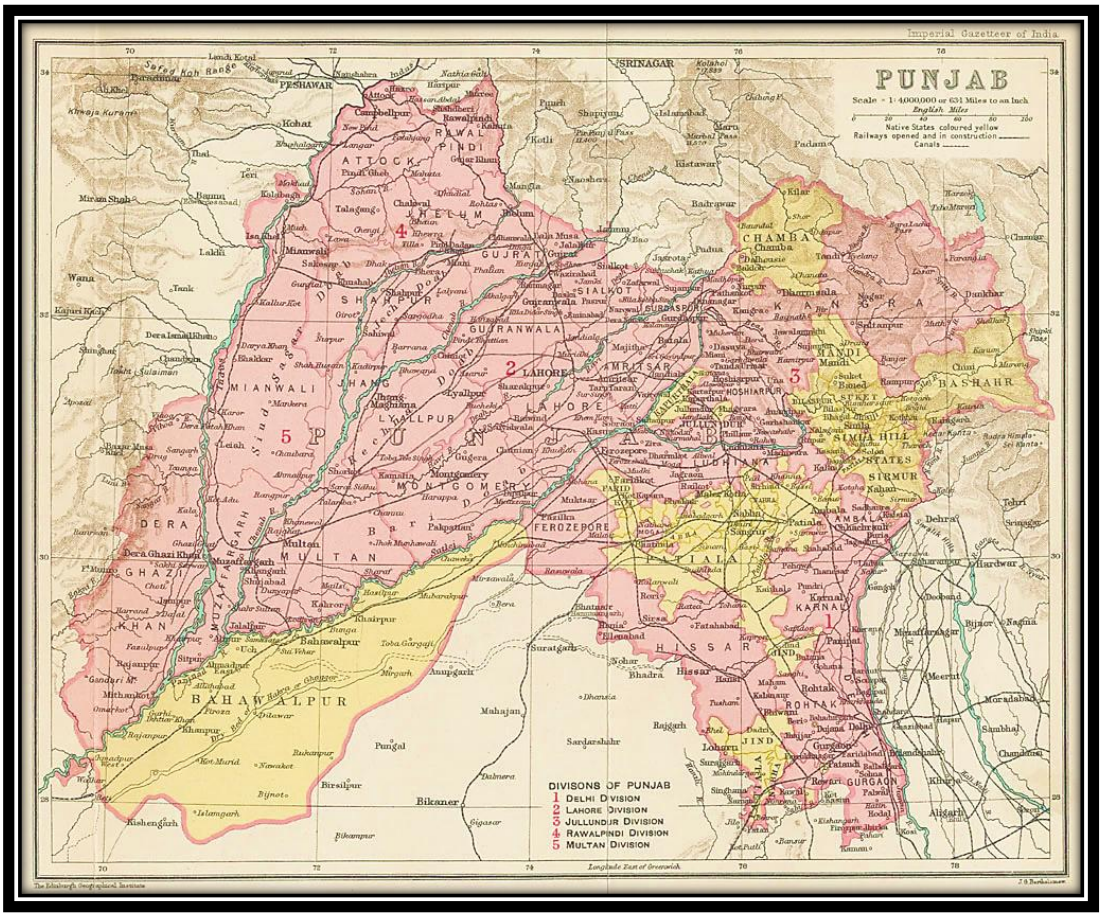

Fig 4.1: Pre-partition map of the Punjab. The areas in yellow denote princely states. Pink areas were a part of British India. Note the central and northern swathes of East Punjab (the right half of the map) territory that was constituted by princely states. The northern 'Hill' states (excluding the Kangra Valley) were constituted into Himachal Pradesh.[1]

[1] Image: 'Punjab' from *Imperial Gazetteer of India Vol. 20* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907-1909), opposite p. 394 [https://dsal.uchicago.edu/maps/gazetteer/images/gazetteer_V20_pg394.jpg, accessed 4 July 2020].

Introduction

Modern India's cultural institutions drew significantly on the cultural assets of princely India to construct a postcolonial national identity. Historic royal collections were the source of 'national' collections, acquired by Government via purchase or persuasion. At the same time, many Indian princes retained their patrimony, to establish their own museums in repurposed palaces. These latter institutions — like the city palaces of Jaipur and Udaipur — are now considered emblematic of the artistic and cultural heritage of their regions.

What, then, did they symbolise in the aftermath of independence, a moment of abundant possibilities for the new nation? What did they signify thereafter, during the process of the princely states' integration, the later linguistic reorganisation of states, and for centre-state relations? What did 'national' collections — and the nation they constructed — owe to princely India? How did former rulers use, resist, and subvert being 'collected' for India, and to what effect?

Barring blockbuster exhibitions exalting their once-splendid courts, the former princely states have seldom merited serious study after 1947, at least, not in relation to constructing the Indian nation. It is ironic that until very recently, the debates on colonial hegemony versus native agency that transformed our interpretation of South Asian history have not substantially altered this scenario. Some scholars have featured princely India as a site for scholarship: for example, on migration and citizenship,[2] regional post-partition politics,[3] and secularism.[4] Others have engaged with the political, social and cultural capital of individual rulers as well as the princely state apparatus: how it was

[2] Joya Chatterji, 'Princes, Subjects, and Gandhi: Alternatives to Citizenship at the End of Empire' in *Partition's Legacies* (Ranikhet: Permanent Black/ Ashoka University, 2019), pp. 488-490.
[3] Ian Copland, 'The Master and the Maharajas: The Sikh Princes and the East Punjab Massacres of 1947', *Modern Asian Studies,* 36:3 (2002), pp. 657-704; Uttara Shahani, 'Sind and the Partition of India, c. 1927-1952', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cambridge (2019).
[4] Taylor Sherman, *Muslim Belonging in Secular India: Negotiating Citizenship in Postcolonial Hyderabad* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

altered by colonialism,[5] or developed and deployed[6] in various ways which continue to be relevant today,[7] including the crafting of local brands of modernity,[8] models for imagining state sovereignty,[9] or understanding politics.[10] These interventions range across disciplines from anthropology and history, to art, architecture, political science and intellectual history. This chapter builds upon this nascent body of work.

However, the question of how the Indian nation was forged is seldom connected to the patronage of art,[11] or located within the space of princely museums. The situation is exacerbated by the stigma of elitism with which the states were branded. But it is unsustainable to ignore thirty-five percent of the subcontinent's population and nearly half its landmass in 1947.

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[5] Nicholas B. Dirks, *The Hollow Crown: Ethnohistory of an Indian Kingdom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

[6] Pamela Price, *Kingship and Political Practice in Colonial India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Aya Ikegame, *Princely India Re-imagined: A Historical Anthropology of Mysore from 1799 to the Present* (Abingdon; New York: Routledge, 2013); Susanne H. Rudolph and Lloyd I. Rudolph, *Romanticism's Child: An Intellectual History of James Tod's Influence on Indian History and Historiography* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2017).

[7] Angma Jhala, *Royal Patronage, Power and Aesthetics in Princely India* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2011).

[8] Manu B. Bhagavan, *Sovereign Spheres: Princes, Education and Empire in Colonial India* (Delhi; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Janaki Nair, *Mysore Modern: Rethinking the Region Under Princely Rule* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011); Eric L. Beverley, *Hyderabad, British India, and the World: Muslim Networks and Minor Sovereignty, c. 1850-1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Teresa Segura-Garcia, 'Baroda, the British Empire and the World, c.1875-1939', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cambridge (2016).

[9] Paolo Durisotto, 'Traditional Rule and Modern Conventions: The Maharajas of Bikaner and their Relationship with the Raj 1887-1947', unpublished PhD thesis, Royal Holloway, University of London (2001); Milinda Banerjee, *The Mortal God: Imagining the Sovereign in Colonial India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

[10] Manu B. Bhagavan, 'Princely States and the Hindu Imaginary: Exploring the Cartography of Hindu Nationalism in Colonial India', *The Journal of Asian Studies,* 67:3 (2008), pp. 881-915; Anastasia Piliavsky (ed.), *Patronage as Politics in South Asia* (Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

[11] Priya Maholay-Jaradi, explores Sayajirao III Gaekwad of Baroda's patronage of art in this context but her study does not extend into the years after independence. See *Fashioning a National Art: Baroda's Royal Collection and Art Institutions (1875-1924)* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2016). Sudeshna Guha alludes to princely resistance to being collected for independent India, but the main thrust of her argument is elsewhere. See 'Decolonizing South Asia through Heritage and Nation Building', *Future Anterior* (Special Issue, Guest Editor: William Carruthers, forthcoming). I am grateful to Dr Guha for sharing the pre-print version of the article.

This chapter, which focuses on East or Indian Punjab, is a preliminary contribution to unpacking the role of the princely states in constructing alternate national and regional imaginaries, and the central importance of museums and archives to this project.

The Patiala and East Punjab States Union

Sardar Vallabhai Patel inaugurated the Patiala and East Punjab States Union (hereafter PEPSU) on 15 July 1948. In an official ceremony at the Durbar Hall of the Qila Mubarak at Patiala, the Deputy Prime Minister with special charge of the Ministry of States[12] swore in Maharaja Yadavindra Singh of Patiala as the Governor (or Rajpramukh) of PEPSU. The latter in turn swore in his Deputy (or Upa-Rajpramukh), Maharaja Jagatjit Singh of Kapurthala. PEPSU consisted of the former princely states of Patiala, Nabha, Jind, Kapurthala, Faridkot, Malerkotla, Nalagarh and Kalsia. Together, they encompassed 10,000 square miles; 350,000 people; and generated about 5.5 million rupees in annual revenue in 1947.[13]

East Punjab surrounded PEPSU and would merge with it in less than ten years, but at its inauguration, this was not self-evident. V. P. Menon reports that he and Patel had had to choose from several proposals put to them, which reflected the competing agendas and ideologies of regional players. Strong claims were made for a Sikh state; a greater Punjab; and continuing princely rule (albeit through popular government) separate from the administration of East Punjab.

For Patiala, which was deemed 'viable' enough to be a standalone constituent of the Indian Union, the last option was most attractive. Patel and Menon's criteria were

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[12] The department was created in 1947 to oversee relations between the government of independent India and the princes, and integrate the latter into the Union. Although headed by Patel, its engine was V. P. Menon. In addition to Menon's own publications about this period (cited in this thesis), for a recent 'popular' biography see Narayani Basu, *V. P. Menon: The Unsung Architect of Modern India* (New Delhi: Simon & Schuster, 2020).

[13] 'Correspondence Reg. Broadcast Talk by Prof. Ganda Singh M. A. PhD. Director of Archives from A. I. Radio', File DAP-5, Basta 26, Punjab State Archives, Patiala. A much higher revenue figure of 50 million is listed in Ministry of States, *White Paper on Indian States* (New Delhi: Government of India, 1950) p. 53.

economic viability, stabilising regional politics, consolidating the defence of a sensitive border area, and concern that they should not further tax the overstretched administration of East Punjab by a merger with any other unit.[14] They also had an enduring fear of the 'Balkanisation' of India combined with a desire to conserve 'the heart of India', which, ironically, the princely states were now perceived to be, owing to their geographic centrality and their social, cultural and religious importance.[15] Sikh politics in particular caused anxiety, owing to Sikhs' anger at their interests being overlooked at partition. 'Until they became crystallized, there was immediate need for a Union of all the Punjab States under the control of the Government of India.'[16] The Union was thus a response to the complicated and fractured politics of Indian Punjab, and the larger 'problem'[17] of the princely states.

These centrifugal forces were much in evidence at the inauguration of PEPSU. In an article titled 'Landmark in History of India's Progress' and 'Sardar Patel's Call for Unity', the *Tribune* newspaper reported Patel's and Yadavindra Singh's speeches on the occasion, summarising some portions and quoting others. It noted the muted attendance, and remarked that representatives of the Praja Mandal[18] and the Akali Party[19] were pointedly absent — notwithstanding their apparent approval of the plan when the covenant had been signed two months previously on 5 May.[20] Patel's speech was as much

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[14] V. P. Menon, *Integration of the Indian States* (London: Sangam, 1985), pp. 241-249; V. P. Menon, *The Transfer of Power in India* (Calcutta: Orient Longman, 1957), pp. 432-434.
[15] Ministry of States, *White Paper*, p. 33; V. P. Menon, *Integration,* pp. 90-91; Barbara N. Ramusack, *Indian Princes and their States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 132-169. Notwithstanding the changing perception of the princes over the twentieth century, and the impatience that the nationalist government displayed towards them, it is interesting that Menon recalled their perceived central role at this moment, although the account was written years later.
[16] V. P. Menon, *Integration*, p. 244. It was further complicated by a variety of reports and rumours, including one that the Sikh princes had divided up Punjab province on paper, and were planning to annex them the minute the British left. Ian Copland, 'The Master and the Maharajas'.
[17] Ministry of States, *White Paper*, p. 7. This was how nationalist politicians and bureaucrats phrased, and indeed viewed the matter.
[18] The local movement for self-government; equivalent to the Congress party in the Provinces, and supported by it. V. P. Menon, *Integration,* p. 247.
[19] The Sikh party, often considered radical because of its demand for a Sikh state. *Ibid.*
[20] *Ibid.*

a warning to 'errant' princes such as Hyderabad and those present, as it was a celebration of PEPSU's formation.[21]

Patel emphasised that the 'responsibility of the rulers and the people of this area was greater than that of any other part of the [Indian] union', multiplied because of the lack of 'friendliness, trust and confidence' in neighbouring Pakistan; as 'border people', their 'duty of unity was heavier.'[22] Patel meant political unity: he referred to the deadlock over forming a ministry, and other administrative chafing points that had produced a quagmire of controversy. So, trying to weld his audience to a common purpose, he reminded them of the recent, painful past; and he called on the spirit of sacrifice that had brought them to this point. He ended by lauding Yadavindra Singh's leading role in unifying the country, referring to PEPSU as 'the key-stone of the arch which the Government of India, with the co-operation of the rulers and the states people has built to contribute towards the stability of the county's structure.'[23] In his response, Yadavindra Singh echoed the key themes: loyalty to the Indian Union, sacrifice for one's country, and unity in the face of the enemy. 'He deplored the fact that Sikhs could unite only in war before the bullets. But they must unite through the bonds of affection. That was real unity, he asserted.'[24] One wonders whether the paradox registered, for a tremendous amount had been left unsaid and much more swept under the carpet, because of the region's complex and not always 'nationalist' politics.[25]

Before partition, the Indian National Congress' avowed position had been that states ought to be organised on linguistic principles. But the view changed after partition: 'the unity of India' became a higher priority. The Constituent Assembly's eagerness to 'consider the issue of statutory reservations for religious minorities' also dwindled after the creation of Pakistan — 'there was no room for weightage to religious minorities in a federal republic with a parliamentary democracy based on adult suffrage, and with the

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[21] 'Inauguration of PEPSU, Sardar Patel's Call 15-7-48' File DAP-7, Basta 26, Punjab State Archives, Patiala, containing a copy of *The Tribune* article dated 16 July 1948.
[22] *Ibid.*
[23] *Ibid.*
[24] *Ibid.*
[25] J. S. Grewal, *The Sikhs of the Punjab* (The New Cambridge History of India, Vol. II.3, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 128-156.

fundamental rights of all its citizens enshrined in a written constitution.'[26] The setbacks resulted in the Sikh representatives of the Constituent Assembly refusing to 'sign the draft constitution adopted by the people of India on 26 January 1950…hardly an auspicious beginning.'[27] Unwilling — or unable — to concede that their political ambitions were frustrated, they sought alternate means to realise their dream of an independent 'Sikh homeland'.[28]

The Sikh princes (foremost among them, Patiala, who saw — and was encouraged to see — himself as the head of such a polity) were their partners in this goal. They had begun to forge an alliance of convenience as early as the 1930s with the Akali Dal — the Sikh political party that claimed to speak for the 'community'. Each had recognised the potential advantages of allying with the other: the social, cultural and religious clout of the Sikh princes versus the Akalis' claim to represent the political aspirations of the Sikhs. Patiala and Nabha had material connections with the tenth teacher Guru Gobind Singh (who had declared the Guru Granth Sahib or Sikh holy book his successor, rather than a human one). For their part, the Akalis were able to stoke political trouble in princely territory over the management of gurudwaras (Sikh places of worship), and cause embarrassment by criticising the heterodox patronage and lifestyles of the Sikh princes, which, they claimed, contravened their faith.[29]

Of the Punjab states, Patiala was the largest and richest; it also had stature at a national level due to Maharaja Bhupinder Singh's (r. 1900-1938) active engagement in politics, including the Chamber of Princes of which he was the Chancellor from 1926-1931.[30] His son, Yadavindra Singh, held the same position from 1943-1944. Nationalist politicians railed against the Chamber's failure to evolve a common agenda or equitable representation for the wildly varying Indian states which ranged in size and importance

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[26] J. S. Grewal, *The Sikhs,* pp. 183-186 *passim.*
[27] *Ibid.*
[28] Ian Copland, 'The Master and the Maharajas'.
[29] *Ibid.*; Barbara N. Ramusack, 'The Incident at Nabha: Interaction between Indian States and British Indian Politics', *The Journal of Asian Studies,* 28:3 (1969), pp. 563-577.
[30] See Barbara N. Ramusack, *The Princes of India in the Twilight of Empire: Dissolution of a Patron-client System, 1914-1939* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press for the University of Cincinnati, 1978), pp. 30, 56-60, 110-112.

from Hyderabad at 82,000 square miles to states like Pataudi at 53 square miles or less.[31] However, it did provide a platform for networking and visibility at an all-India level, in addition to opportunities to negotiate as a collective to minimise interference from the British, who were in the princes' collective debt for their assistance during the world wars in particular.[32] That platform was dominated by Patiala — a point of some significance.[33]

On the eve of partition, Sikh ambitions for an independent homeland coalesced around the figure and estates of Yadavindra Singh of Patiala. Whatever the princely order's hopes, fears and machinations for a postcolonial world,[34] it is recognised that some[35] of them supported (at the very least), or (at worst) incited the ethnic cleansing of Muslims from East Punjab in the months surrounding partition:[36] whether by providing arms, ammunition[37] and safe haven for perpetrators of the mass killings and expulsions;

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[31] V. P. Menon, *Integration*, pp. 316, 308. However, it has been argued that the Chamber was good practice for the princes to organise in independent India, at which they were successful, even if their objective of preserving privy purse privileges failed. William L. Richter and Barbara N. Ramusack, 'The Chamber and the Consultation: Changing Forms of Princely Association in India', *The Journal of Asian Studies,* 34:3 (1975), pp. 755-776.

[32] Barbara N. Ramusack, *The Princes of India*; Ian Copland, *The Princes of India in the Endgame of Empire, 1917-1947* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

[33] For an 'in-house' account of Patiala's position within the Raj and among the princes, see K. Natwar Singh, *The Life and Times of Maharaja Bhupindar Singh of Patiala (1891-1938)* (New Delhi: Rupa & Co., 2005). It is valuable for its reproduction of family archival material, which is not available to the public to consult, but it has its limitations.

[34] E. M. Jenkins, Governor of Punjab in a note dated 30 July 1947, recorded a conversation with Giani Kartar Singh (key Akali leader) in which the latter suggested that the Sikh States would 'come in with them' (i.e. the Akalis) on the project of creating a Sikh-majority Province, which they had not told Punjab's Hindus. Lionel Carter (ed.), *Punjab Politics: 1 June 1947-14 August 1947 Tragedy* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2007), p. 183.

[35] Malerkotla was a notable exception, and Anna Bigelow has discussed the possible reasons. Anna Bigelow, 'Punjab's Muslims: The History and Significance of Malerkotla', *Journal of Punjab Studies*, 12:1 (2005), pp. 63-94; Anna Bigelow, 'Post-Partition Pluralism: Placing Islam in Indian Punjab' in *Punjab Reconsidered: History, Culture, Practice,* ed. by Anshu Malhotra and Farina Mir (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2012). Copland also notes that Muslims fared better in Jind and Kapurthala compared with Patiala, Faridkot, Kalsia, and Nabha. Ian Copland, 'The Master and the Maharajas', p. 694.

[36] Ian Copland, 'The Master and the Maharajas'; Ian Copland, 'The Further Shores of Partition: Ethnic Cleansing in Rajasthan 1947', *Past and Present,* 160 (1998), pp. 203-239.

[37] Major W. M. Hutton, whom Copland has identified as being responsible for producing ammunition (on which I have seen a file in the Patiala State Archives), was also the Curator and Taxidermist of the Patiala 'museum', an ad-hoc collection of mainly arms and hunting trophies that was open to the public. File nos. 359, 622, 8930, Iljas-i-khas; 'Taxidermy Section of the Museum', File 8008, Education, Punjab State Archives, Patiala.

lending their state forces; or turning a blind eye, perhaps with the effective connivance of the Indian state, even if not its outright support.[38] The question of whether violence in Punjab and bordering areas of Rajasthan qualified as genocide, or ethnic cleansing exercises scholars.[39] But what is more relevant here is that the bloodshed set into motion a radical change in demographics across the Radcliffe line and a sea change in perceptions of belonging, rights, and citizenship.[40]

Ian Copland argues that the Punjab princes signalled their inclinations by replacing key staff of other faiths with Sikhs (often Akalis).[41] When it became apparent that an independent Sikh state was a chimera, federating into PEPSU appeared the next best alternative. It was against this backdrop that the smoky outlines of what it meant to be Punjabi in independent India emerged between Patel's and the Maharaja's words.

The region and its inhabitants were being set up to define themselves not only as victims of partition, but as shouldering a burden of greatness. Punjab was 'exceptional'. It was a frontier: its regions must pull together. Although expressed in a PEPSU-specific context, these sentiments were applicable to the wider East Punjab. Almost fifteen years later Dr Ganda Singh (previously PEPSU's Director of Archives) illustrated this, whilst seeking to assuage apprehensions of a clash between national and regional interests. He declared at the second Punjab History Conference that, 'The history of the Punjab is not

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[38] Pippa Virdee, while acknowledging the difficulty of discussing partition without it being overshadowed by violence, emphasises Malerkotla's importance in making a space for alternate narratives that destabilise the jingoistic and oppositional discourse between India and Pakistan. See *From the Ashes of 1947: Reimagining Punjab* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).
[39] For instance, Ishtiaq Ahmed, *The Punjab Bloodied, Partitioned and Cleansed: Unravelling the 1947 Tragedy Through Secret British Reports and First-person Accounts* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2012); Anders Bjørn Hansen, *Partition and Genocide: Manifestation of Violence in Punjab 1937-1947* (New Delhi: India Research Press, 2002); Claude Markovits, 'The Partition of India' in *Divided Countries, Separated Cities: The Modern Legacy of Partition* ed. by Ghislaine Glasson Deschaumes and Rada Iveković (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003); Haimanti Roy, *Partitioned Lives: Migrants, Refugees, Citizens in India and Pakistan, 1947-65* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2013).
[40] Ian Copland, 'The Further Shores of Partition'.
[41] Ian Copland, 'The Master and the Maharajas', p. 677. He has also argued that the Muslim League courted the Sikh princes among other 'border' states at the last minute, albeit with little success. The thrust of his argument is elsewhere; what is relevant here is the many possible options for sovereignty that different parties were considering at the time. Ian Copland, 'The Princely States, the Muslim League, and the Partition of India in 1947', *The International History Review,* 13:1 (1991), pp. 38-69.

regional history in the narrow sense of the word. The history of the Indian sub-continent begins in the Punjab[42]…The Punjab has always played a very prominent role in the various currents and cross-currents of Indian History'.[43]

Patel and the Maharaja also specifically addressed their remarks to the Sikhs. There may have been several reasons for this emphasis. Six of the eight covenanting states in PEPSU had Sikh rulers. They held sway over the Sikhs concentrated in the state, which had swelled with the influx of refugees to the point that in 1951 there were more Sikhs than Hindus in PEPSU, just shy of an overall Sikh majority.[44] Fluid politics, still-unsettled allegiances to the Indian nation, the trauma of partition, and the tensions of inter-Dominion conflicts thus formed the backdrop against which museum collecting and constructions of regional identity gathered momentum.

Princely Collections and Competing National Imaginaries

In draft text for a radio talk about PEPSU submitted to the PEPSU Prime Minister's office in February 1949, the Director of the PEPSU Archives, Dr Ganda Singh, outlined the history of its constituent princely states.[45] His conclusion was that:

> 'the Rulers and the States are bound together by blood relations, by brotherly ties and historical antecedents. Now they, attuning themselves to the spirit of the time, have decided to wind up their separate establishments and pool their resources in the interest of the people over whom they ruled and in the wider interest of the country the welfare of which lies close to their heart.'[46]

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[42] *Punjab History Conference, Second Session (October 28-30,1966)* (Patiala: Punjabi University, 1968), pp. 1-4.
[43] *Punjab History Conference, First Session (November 12-14, 1965)* (Patiala: Punjabi University, 1966), p. 1. These themes reappeared in all his speeches throughout his involvement with the Conference.
[44] Ian Copland, 'The Master and the Maharajas', p. 698.
[45] He then spoke on their geography, climate, people, industries, and potential for economic and cultural growth.
[46] 'Note for Radio Talk on PEPSU', File DAP/1949, Basta 26, Punjab State Archives, Patiala, p. 5.


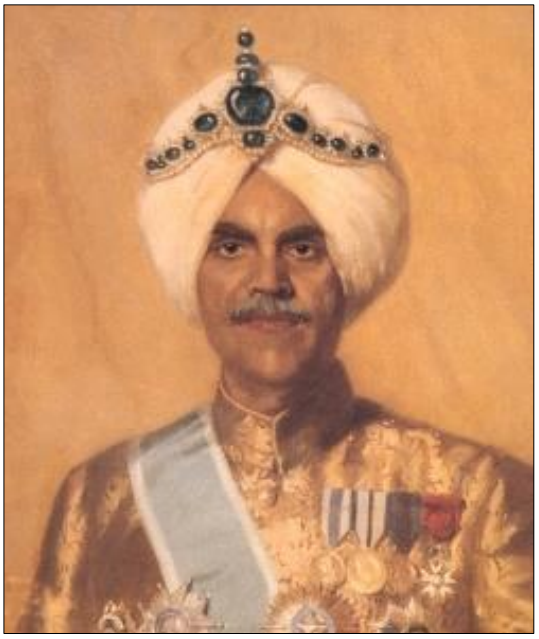

Fig 4.2 & 4.3: (left) Maharaja Yadavindra Singh of Patiala (1913-1974) pictured here around the time of his accession in 1938. He was appointed Rajpramukh of PEPSU state in 1948.[47] *(right) Maharaja Jagatjit Singh of Kapurthala (b. 1872; r. 1877-1949) was appointed Upa-Rajpramukh but died soon afterwards.*[48]

[47] Image: 'Patiala', *royalark.net* [https://www.royalark.net/India/patiala7.htm, accessed 14 July 2020].
[48] Image: 'Kapurthala', *royalark.net* [https://www.royalark.net/India/kapurth4.htm, accessed 14 July 2020].

He emphasised that PEPSU was well suited for the role of 'bulwark against outside aggression…being the home of martial people', who made 'one homogenous whole' and handled 'the plough and the gun with equal ease'.[49] Another talk broadcast on All India Radio on 30 August 1954 focussed on the 'historicity of PEPSU'. For this, Dr Singh began several thousand years before, and concluded by recounting Maharaja Yadavindra Singh's glorious role in preventing the Balkanisation of India; oddly, if fervently, ending with: 'May God bless her [i.e. Patiala]. Amen.'[50]

Dr Singh's emphasis was on the covenanting states' close-knit relationships and their historic credentials, reiterating that they were the 'heart' of India. Regurgitating a now-familiar trope, he portrayed their people as reliable sons of the soil, hardworking, and with military ability (previously used for their own ends or harnessed by the Raj, but which they could turn towards the defence of independent India). He emphasised their unity in the common purpose of nation-building.[51] To my mind, the protestations do the opposite, betraying the anxieties Dr Singh was seeking to assuage: that the princes, their covenant, and their people were unpredictable and probably untrustworthy (in light of the princely links with violence in East Punjab); and worse, too busy fighting amongst one another and pursuing petty interests to pay attention to the enemy nipping at their flanks.

A rich body of work explores the ways in which nations are constructed and the many ways they are imagined into being. These can range from the 'banal',[52] to the links afforded by a public sphere,[53] the fictional universe forged by common language or reading habits,[54] or as staged on platforms created by the state.[55] Ganda Singh's public

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[49] *Ibid.,* pp. 5-7.
[50] 'Correspondence Reg. Broadcast Talk by Prof. Ganda Singh', p. 6.
[51] 'Note for Radio Talk on PEPSU', pp. 3-11, *passim*.
[52] Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1995).
[53] This is discussed further in Chapter VI of this thesis. Francesca Orsini, *The Hindi Public Sphere, 1920-1940: Language and Literature in the Age of Nationalism* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2012).
[54] Ulrike Stark, *An Empire of Books: The Naval Kishore Press and the Diffusion of the Printed Word in Colonial India* (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2007); Anindita Ghosh, *Power in Print: Popular Publishing and the Politics of Language and Culture in a Colonial Society* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006).
[55] Srirupa Roy, *Beyond Belief: India and the Politics of Postcolonial Nationalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).

addresses gave the people of PEPSU a common identity by recounting a shared history, and 'a future which will see thousands employed in industrial and agricultural pursuits…and make a considerable contribution to the Treasury of the Union'.[56] The image his words conveyed of the local (mainly Sikh) populace fit the role Patel had outlined for them at the inauguration, serving to validate and reassure similar expectations from others, listening, one imagines, from all corners of India. And it designated a space within the Indian Union to politically volatile groups that were uncertain as to whether, and how, they belonged.

As a state-sponsored home for the material culture of PEPSU, the Department of Archives was the brick and mortar base for, and institutionalised manifestation of, these compulsions. By 1954, Ganda Singh reported that the Patiala archives had 'one of the richest collections of historical records and manuscripts in northern India'.[57] This had been made possible by amalgamating the records of all covenanting states. Nor was he shy to assert his department's prerogatives. On one occasion, he inquired of the Deputy Commissioner of Kapurthala whether he 'actually needed…all the…records…in bulk' since as per Government orders, 'the old records of the erstwhile States are to be concentrated in the Archives Department' and only more recent files required for daily administrative matters were meant to be retained by District authorities.[58] As a result of assiduous collecting, Ganda Singh observed with no little satisfaction that while the Punjab had been,

> 'robbed of its historical wealth at Lahore by the division of the country, the value and importance of Patiala collection have [sic] been greatly enhanced. It is now the proud possessor of many a unique manuscripts [sic] of which no copies are available in any of the Government Archives or public or private libraries in the country.'[59]

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[56] 'Correspondence Reg. Broadcast Talk by Prof. Ganda Singh', pp. 6-7.
[57] Note on the Patiala Archives and Museum prepared by Dr Ganda Singh, sent to the Law Secretary dated 27 July 1953, 'Misc Correspondence of Archives Dept', pp. 157, 159, 173, 175, File 7923, Education, Punjab State Archives, Patiala.
[58] Dr Ganda Singh to the Deputy Commissioner Kapurthala, 13 March 1953, 'Misc correspondence of Archives dept', p. 119.
[59] Note on the Patiala Archives and Museum, pp. 157, 159, 173, 175, *passim*.

Here was an unexpected and ambiguous dividend of partition: it robbed Punjab, but increased Patiala's status, including through the treasures acquired from the rest of PEPSU.

The situation was similar at the PEPSU museum. Based in Patiala, its genesis seems to lie in the Patiala State Museum, an ad-hoc collection of exhibits — mainly taxidermy and armour, the latter of some historical value as they included swords and daggers ascribed to 'Guru Gobind Singh, Mughal Emperor Jehangir and Shah Abbas of Persia and of the ruling chiefs of the Phulkian House.'[60] They were already on display to the public, subsequently amalgamated with the Archives between 1949 and 1951.

Located within the Qila Mubarak — the seventeenth century fort built by the founder of the state — the museum had been popular with local people and visitors (including Rudyard Kipling) since the mid-nineteenth century.[61] It contained an eclectic mix of objects that was typical of indigenous modes of collecting ranging from paintings and sculptures to arms, stupendous chandeliers and other crystal objects,[62] to the Patiala State coach, motorcars, and the fossilised head of an elephant and a 'Taxydemic Section' with 'quite a representative collection of jungle animals and birds of rare beauty and variety'.[63] But Ganda Singh had had more ambitious plans for a 'worthy' museum since 1948.

He planned to enhance the 'veritable art and picture gallery' that was the Durbar (or formal audience) hall, with 'pictures and paintings of the Ruling families and others that [were being] brought over from Sangrur and…from Kapurthala and other places…

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[60] *Ibid.*

[61] According to Kipling, the contents of the State Museum were, in essence, Maharaja Mohinder Singh's shopping, amalgamated into a Museum after his death (in 1876). It would be inherited by the next Maharaja (Rajinder Singh, then a minor); in the meanwhile, these were 'curiosities' for the public. Rudyard Kipling, 'The Viceroy at Patiala', *Civil and Military Gazette* 22 March 1884 in *Kipling's India: Uncollected Sketches 1884-1888* ed. by Thomas Pinney (London; Basingstoke: Papermac, 1987). K. Natwar Singh cites Kipling, but misquotes; and mixes up the Maharajas, in *The Magnificent Maharaja*, pp. 35-38.

[62] These were nor mere knickknacks. Patiala is one of several Indian states with important glass furnishings. See Jane Shadel Spillman, *European Glass Furnishings for Eastern Palaces* (Corning: Corning Museum of Glass, 2006).

[63] Note on the Patiala Archives and Museum, pp. 157, 159, 173, 175, *passim*.

along with the paintings of the ruling house of Patiala.'[64] Giving Patiala prime position in the central portion of the hall, he proposed to allot 'the uncovered portions' and 'side-rooms' at right and left to the other States, 'so that all the Constituent States are represented there.'[65] What he wanted was 'a real National Art and Picture Gallery of which our government, in course of time, will feel rightly proud.'[66]

Savithri Preetha Nair and others have begun to investigate older indigenous modes of collecting and display and have shown that, far from being random, it had social value and purpose. They suggest that it contributed to the construction of a princely ecumene quite as much as any colonial enterprise. Collecting proclaimed status, refinement, influence, and intellectual authority; added to the allure of a prince; and allowed those with dubious ancestry to acquire pedigree and legitimacy.[67] Within this context, princely museums have a history of subverting dominant narratives: not only did some (such as Jaipur's) invert colonial stereotypes of princely inefficiency, but they also wrested control of the colonial knowledge-gathering enterprise and repositioned it in indigenous hands.[68]

Recent research on twentieth century photography has shown, likewise, that we cannot dismiss the adoption of colonial technologies as mere copycat behaviour.[69] For example, the meaning of a post-1857 image of the Lucknow Residency changes when we recognise that one version of it was made by the British firm of Bourne & Shepherd, and

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[64] Dr Ganda Singh to the Chief Secretary to Government, Home Department, PEPSU, 1 December 1950, 'Transfer of Jalaukhana to Archives Dept', p. 47, File 6867, Education, Punjab State Archives, Patiala.
[65] *Ibid.*
[66] *Ibid.*
[67] Barbara Stoler Miller (ed.), *The Powers of Art: Patronage in Indian Culture* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992); Maya Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire: Conquest and Collecting in the East 1750-1850* (London: Fourth Estate, 2005); Savithri Preetha Nair, *Raja Serfoji II: Science, Medicine and Enlightenment in Tanjore* (London: Routledge, 2012)*;* Rosie Llewellyn-Jones, *The Last King in India: Wajid 'Ali Shah, 1822-1887* (London: Hurst & Co., 2014); Priya Maholay-Jaradi, *Fashioning a National Art*.
[68] C. A. Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 53-57; Julie F. Codell, 'Ironies of Mimicry: The Art Collection of Sayajirao III, Maharaja of Baroda, and the Cultural Politics of Early Modern India', *Journal of the History of Collections,* 15:1 (2003), pp. 127-146; Giles Tillotson, 'The Jaipur Exhibition of 1883', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 14:2 (2004), pp. 111-126.
[69] Homi Bhabha, 'Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse' in *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 2004), pp. 121-131.

the other by Maharaja Sawai Ram Singh II of Jaipur.[70] Therefore it is unsurprising that museums and exhibitions became important avenues for patronage and asserting agency from the nineteenth century onwards, unconstrained by state boundaries, and subverting colonial agendas.[71] Here, I suggest that former rulers continued to use museums as an instrument, this time to negotiate their place within the framework of the modern Indian state.

Senior bureaucrats, as well as the Rajpramukh, evinced a keen interest in the fledgling PEPSU museum at the Qila. Yadavindra Singh made several visits and dictated recommendations on large and small matters, from the need for uniform plastering, to space allocation.[72] To an extent, it appears he regarded the museum as a personal fief, reasserting his position as Rajpramukh and the senior prince of the Punjab. On special occasions such as the visit of the Soviet Premier Nikolai Bulganin in December 1955, he selected swords as mementos, along with the Chief Minister Brish Bhan.[73] The episode highlights the value of historic objects in general, and swords in particular, as the appropriate diplomatic gift: channelling authenticity, legitimacy, and the stock image of Sikh military ability.

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[70] Mrinalini Venkateswaran, 'The View from the Tasveerkhana: Photography at the Jaipur Court' in *Painting and Photography at the Jaipur Court* ed. by Giles Tillotson and Mrinalini Venkateswaran (New Delhi: Niyogi Books, 2016), pp. 139-166.

[71] Vibhuti Sachdev, 'Negotiating Modernity in the Princely State of Jaipur', *South Asian Studies*, 28:2 (2012), pp. 171-181; Sugata Ray, 'Colonial Frames, "Native" Claims: The Jaipur Economic and Industrial Museum', *Art Bulletin*, 96:2 (2014), pp. 196-21. Kapurthala held what has been described as a 'mini "World's Fair"' in 1927 on the occasion of Maharaja Jagatjit Singh's Jubilee celebrations. However, the wording appears to reflect the spirit of the event rather than the facts, as the exhibits were from all over India. Brigadier H. H. Sukhjit Singh and Cynthia Meera Frederick, *Prince Patron and Patriarch: Maharaja Jagatjit Singh of Kapurthala* (New Delhi: Roli Books, 2019), p. 71. There is still little analysis of such events in princely states (and none, to my knowledge, on Kapurthala). The available scholarship has been referred to in Chapter II of this thesis.

[72] 'Organisation of Museum in Qila Mubarak', File 8018; 'Reorganisation of Museum in the Qila Mubarak', File 8030, Punjab State Archives, Patiala.

[73] 'Centralisation of Records, Museum Progress Report', File 7935; 'Monthly Progress Reports' Files 7973, 8021, 8085, Punjab State Archives, Patiala.

Figs 4.4 & 4.5: (above) View of the Qila Mubarak; and (below) the interior of the Durbar Hall as it is today.[74]

[74] Image: Website of the Film Facilitation Office, India [https://ffo.gov.in/en/locations/location-information/171, accessed 19 August 2020].

Meanwhile, as Ganda Singh exerted himself to build up his department, he also had to plug unexpected leaks. In 1951,

> 'Dr. N. P. Chakrawarti [sic], then Director General of Archaeology had removed certain Museum pieces including valuable Arms, Manuscripts, documents, Paintings, etc., from the Kapurthala Toshakhana at the instance of His Highness Kapurthala without the consent of the PEPSU Government who became the rightful owner of the things after formation of the Union.'

It took 'a good deal of correspondence on the Government level' to have these items returned, and the case was finally closed in October 1953.[75] During the protracted negotiations, the PEPSU government allowed selected items for which duplicates were available in its own collection to be retained in New Delhi,[76] to become a part of the National Museum's collection.

These rather dry facts conceal undercurrents. What had caused friction in the first place? Why had Chakravarti gone to Kapurthala, without involving the PEPSU government? As discussed in previous chapters, the Government of India was alert to the value of historic collections well before 1947 and had begun to collect for a national museum soon after independence. The Ministry of Education, which was responsible for the efforts, courted former rulers for their artistic heritage, pointing out the natural advantages of displaying their collections in the national capital on which the national imaginary and international interest would, they assumed, be centred.

Claiming rulers' patriotism for the nation, in reality, the exchanges underscore the many complex relationships at play: those among the Punjab princes; and those between former rulers, and the political leaders of independent India and Pakistan.[77] For the latter, in a continuation of colonial stereotypes (stagnation, inadequate governance, wasteful

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[75] Dr Ganda Singh to the Under-Secretary to Government, Education and Health Department, 27 August 1953, 'Misc Correspondence of Archives Dept', pp. 195, 203, 217, 219, *passim*.
[76] List of items taken and returned, with remark: 'May be retained at Delhi'. 'Misc Correspondence of Archives Dept.*,* pp. 205-209.
[77] Barbara N. Ramusack, *The Indian Princes*; Ian Copland, *The Princes of India;* Robin Jeffrey (ed.), *People, Princes and Paramount Power: Society and Politics in the Indian Princely States* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1978). The Indian princes' relations with the Congress party are also relevant. For a study of Rajasthan, see Richard Sisson, *The Congress Party in Rajasthan: Political Integration and Institution-Building in an Indian State* (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: The University of California Press, 1972).

extravagance, meaningless ritual,[78] and oppression[79]), they were a 'problem'[80] that needed solving, through a range of tactics from persuasion to coercion and force. One complication was the fact that the fledgling Indian nation owed a staggering debt to the Indian states. Their cash balances, buildings, and other physical assets, and in some cases, administrative infrastructure, had been essential resources, needed for government to function after independence.[81]

During this period, the princely order was far from being extinct. Full political integration was still some time away. Former rulers still presented viable alternatives as political leaders; and unions like PEPSU an alternate template for components of the Indian Union, of which New Delhi was only too aware. Joya Chatterji has suggested that many refugees of partition saw 'subjecthood' as a desirable alternative to 'citizenship'. Even Gandhi, despite his support of agitations against 'many aspects of princely rule in the 1930s and 1940s' could see the potential role of the princes 'in the postcolonial future of South Asia', to the astonishment of his colleagues.[82]

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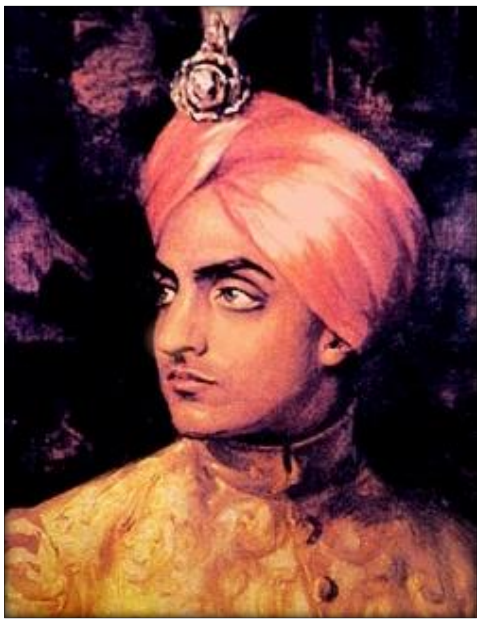
[78] This was mirrored in scholarly enquiries that characterised colonial princely rule as reduced by British policy to 'hollow crowns' (Nicholas Dirks, *The Hollow Crown).*

[79] V. P. Menon, *Integration*, pp. 486-494, *passim*. He refers to 'normal' political development having been impeded in the princely states.

[80] Ministry of States, *White Paper*, p. 7.

[81] *Ibid.*, p. 482; Sardar Vallabhai Patel in *Ibid.,* p. 488; Rakesh Ankit, 'Junagadh, India, and the Logic of Occupation and Appropriation, 1947-49', *Studies in History,* 34:2 (2018), pp. 109-140; see Uttara Shahani, 'Sind and the Partition of India, c. 1927-1952', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cambridge (2019), pp. 273-280 for a discussion on land granted by the Maharao of Kutch to refugees, later acquired for Kandla port by the Government of India.

[82] Joya Chatterji, 'Princes, Subjects, and Gandhi', pp. 488-490.



Figs 4.6 & 4.7: (above) Maharaja Paramjit Singh of Kapurthala (r. 1949-1955); and (below) the Jagatjit Palace, modelled on Versailles, now the Sainik School.[83]

[83] Images: (above) 'Kapurthala', *royalark.net* [https://www.royalark.net/India/kapurth4.htm, accessed 5 May 2020]; (below) Graham Beards, Wikimedia Commons [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kapurthala_Sainik_School.jpg, accessed 5 May 2020] [https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/deed.en].

Movements for the linguistic realignment of state borders (long running in many cases,[84] and not 'out of nowhere in 1947'[85]) provided the trigger for the more substantial states' reorganisation that took place after 1956.[86] But it is likely that the continuing pull of the princes as 'a potential focus of alternative notions of sovereignty, legitimacy, and belonging' incentivised national governments in India to 'dismantl[e] them…rapidly and ruthlessly between 1948 and 1950.'[87] Arundhati Virmani points to the very 'real' power of princely symbols such as banners or state flags. 'Tensions were unleashed' when the 'national' flag was raised during Nehru's visit to Bangalore (capital of Mysore State) in 1931, leading to a ban on any flag *other* than the Mysore State flag being raised within State boundaries.[88]

V. P. Menon recalled in 1985 that:

> 'the real integration had to take place in the minds of the people. This could not be accomplished overnight. It would take some time for the people of the erstwhile States to outgrow their regional loyalties and to develop a wider outlook and broader vision.'[89]

Chakravarti's attempt to collect Kapurthala for the nation could thus be read as an instance of the wider attempt to 'integrate' the princes into the nation in visible fashion, through cultural means. Was the Maharaja of Kapurthala's willingness to be 'collected' for the nation a successful example of this strategy?[90]

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[84] Lisa Mitchell, *Language, Emotion, and Politics in South India* (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2009); Sumathi Ramaswamy, *Passions of the Tongue: Language Devotion in Tamil India, 1891-1970*, (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 1997); Veena Naregal, *Language Politics, Elites, and the Public Sphere* (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2001). Christian Lee Novetzke argues for a nascent public sphere in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, rooted in 'the everyday life of a place', contributing to the growth of Marathi. *The Quotidian Revolution: Vernacularization, Religion, and the Premodern Public Sphere in India* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), p. 34.
[85] Joya Chatterji, 'Princes, Subjects and Gandhi', p. 493.
[86] See Asha Sarangi and Sudha Pai (eds.), *Interrogating Reorganisation of States: Culture, Identity and Politics in India* (New Delhi: Routledge/ Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, 2011) for an assessment of historic, post-independence and proposed reorganisation across India.
[87] Joya Chatterji, 'Princes, Subjects and Gandhi', p. 493.
[88] Arundhati Virmani, *A National Flag for India: Rituals, Nationalism, and the Politics of Sentiment* (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2008), p.252.
[89] V. P. Menon, *Integration*, p. 490.
[90] Maharaja Jagatjit Singh died in 1949 and was succeeded by his son Maharaja Paramjit Singh (r. 1949-1955).

Perhaps, if only in part. Kapurthala was one of eight states, dwarfed in size, resources and prestige by Patiala, whose capital was also the capital of PEPSU. Its globe-trotting, multi-lingual, cosmopolitan Maharaja Jagatjit Singh, at whose table the whole world had dined, had rivalled (perhaps even eclipsed) Patiala's splendour over a long reign, regardless of their disparity in 'official' gun salute rankings.[91] That era had ended with his death in 1949, bringing with it the loss of a position in the PEPSU hierarchy (the appointment of Upa-Rajpramukh was not hereditary).

Meanwhile, a steady flow of historic materials made their way out of Kapurthala and the rest of PEPSU, destined for a centralised museum and archive in Patiala. Brigadier Sukhjit Singh, Jagatjit Singh's grandson, is 'stoic' about the sadness of 'this destiny' for Kapurthala's heritage, even as he is philosophical about the impermanence of owning things.[92] Yet, the fact that he still recalls the event almost seventy years later, cannot but mean that it stung at the time. For in this new museum, it was Patiala that held pride of place; its ruler was still the Rajpramukh, and he took a personal interest in showcasing PEPSU's cultural heritage.

In this context, Kapurthala allowing Chakravarti to remove prized items to the National Museum meant that Kapurthala's cultural assets became leverage. Not only were they removed from Patiala's control, but having lost its independent allure, Kapurthala could compensate by gaining visibility on a national and international platform unlike its peers, whose cultural assets would be on view only in Patiala.

As with the Punjab Historical Records Office's efforts to acquire materials from individuals using the language of national importance and patriotic duty (see previous chapter), participating in collection-building offered former rulers a way to articulate their citizenship, affirm belonging, and imagine the nation too. But it *also* allowed them to continue to project themselves in their traditional role as patrons of art and culture, whilst *simultaneously* seeming to act in the national interest. It was also self-interest at

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[91] It is beyond this thesis to delve into the subject in detail, but it is evident that there was plenty of scope for competition. See Brigadier H. H. Sukhjit Singh and Cynthia Meera Frederick, *Prince Patron and Patriarch,* for an overview of Maharaja Jagatjit Singh's life and varied interests. Although a biography and memoir rather than a scholarly work, it offers some fascinating details from family sources that are not accessible to the public.

[92] *Ibid.,* p. 196.

some level: the patron-client relationship[93] between New Delhi and the princes continued, albeit in diluted form. Until the abolition of titles in 1971, the Government of India continued to play the role of patron: it confirmed successors to their erstwhile thrones, and was the source of privy purses and other diminished privileges. It also provided ambassadorial postings that used former rulers' international networks and standing to the national advantage. One can interpret it as another form of 'integration', via cultural means.[94]

Whilst linguistic nationalism presents one kind of challenge to a centralising vision of the nation, this example demonstrates another, couched in material and cultural terms, that was widespread in the former princely states.[95] It was also one with deep roots, for there are several examples of princely rulers seeking to assert their sovereignty and construct a 'national' identity, through art patronage on international platforms, or directed at such audiences.[96] In this example, the PEPSU government resisted New Delhi's authority, while seeking to impose its own within PEPSU, in turn subverted (or at least challenged) by Kapurthala. Contrary to popular and scholarly perception, it demonstrates that loaning or selling collections to national institutions was neither an impulsive move, nor one fuelled by financial considerations alone. It undermines the idea that the princes who subsequently established palace museums did so only because they were short of cash and forced to trade on their reputation for exoticism.[97] Indeed, part of

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[93] Barbara N. Ramusack, *The Princes of India.*

[94] A further aspect of this (although outside the scope of this thesis) is that several rulers (or their heirs, after 1947) opted for military service, tapping into another 'cultural' cachet, one of martial ability. Also see Angma Jhala, 'The Jodhpur Regency: Princely Education, Politics and Gender in Post-colonial India', *South Asian History and Culture*, 1:3 (2010), pp. 378-396.

[95] File 4-L/49, Ministry of States, L and A Branch, National Archives of India.

[96] Julie F. Codell, 'Ironies of Mimicry'; Giles Tillotson, 'The Jaipur Exhibition of 1883'; Vibhuti Sachdev, 'Negotiating Modernity'; Priya Maholay-Jaradi, *Fashioning a National Art*; Jung H. Kim, 'Rethinking Vivekananda Through Space and Territorialised Spirituality, 1880-1920', unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Cambridge (2018). Maholay-Jaradi argues that by showcasing both elite 'artists' and craftspersons, Maharaja Sayajirao III Gaekwad of Baroda constructed a democratic or egalitarian vision of the nation.

[97] Barbara N. Ramusack, 'The Indian Princes as Fantasy: Palace Hotels, Palace Museums, and Palace on Wheels' in *Consuming Modernity: Public Culture in a South Asian World,* ed by Carol A. Breckenridge (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), pp. 66-89.

a growing body of literature on princely India are studies that foreground their continuing social, political and cultural relevance in independent India.[98]

Reorganised Punjab

Contrary to the States Ministry's expectations, the creation of PEPSU in 1948 did not 'better canalize'[99] Sikh politics. Their longstanding aspirations for a designated homeland, albeit in truncated East Punjab, remained unfulfilled despite support from the Sikh princes, including Yadavindra Singh of Patiala.[100] These efforts received a fresh impetus with the rise of regional linguistic movements, which enabled reframing the demands in new terms, prompting the Hindi-speaking groups of Punjab to make similar claims. The push to merge Punjabi-speaking regions of Punjab did result in the merger of PEPSU into East Punjab, but the larger campaign was unsuccessful because it blurred the boundaries between linguistic and religious nationalism. There was every evidence that the issue at stake was the Sikh right to a homeland of their own, but the precedent of partition ensured that a communal logic was anathema to the Government of India.[101] After much discussion and negotiation, Punjab became bilingual in 1956. Yet Sikh-Punjabi vs Hindu-Hindi resentments continued to simmer,[102] complicated by calls for the

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[98] Fiona Groenhout, 'The History of the Indian Princely States: Bringing the Puppets Back into Centre Stage', *History Compass,* 4:4 (2006), pp. 629-644; Manu B. Bhagavan, *Sovereign Spheres*; Janaki Nair, *Mysore Modern*; Angma Jhala, *Royal Patronage, Power and Aesthetics;* Priya Maholay-Jaradi, *Fashioning a National Art*.

[99] Maharaja Yadavindra Singh to V. P. Menon, in V. P. Menon, *Integration*, p. 245.

[100] E. M. Jenkins note dated 30 July 1947, in *Punjab Politics* ed. by Lionel Carter (New Delhi: Manohar, 2007), p. 181.

[101] Sudipta Kaviraj, *The Imaginary Institution of India* (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2010), p. 158. Louise Tillin has noted that other reasons could also prevent the division of large states. In the Hindi heartland of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, sacred geographies played a role. Louise Tillin, *Remapping India: New States and their Political Origins* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2013). Once accomplished, archaeology was used to substantiate states' 'ancient' pasts, such as in Gujarat. See Sudeshna Guha, 'Heritage and the Curation of the Archaeological Scholarship of India' in V. Selvakumar, S. Hemanth, S. K. Aruni (eds.), *South Asian Archaeology — from the Palaeolithic to the Present: Essays in Honour of Prof K. Paddayya* (forthcoming).

[102] And their respective scripts: Gurmukhi vs Devanagari. P. K. Sharma, *Political Aspects of States Reorganisation in India* (New Delhi: Mohuni Publications, 1969), pp. 192-244.

Pahari-speaking region of Kangra to merge with Himachal Pradesh. The latter grew into a demand for full statehood. It was not until these demands were reframed in linguistic terms alone that Punjab's boundaries were settled — in a manner of speaking[103] — creating contemporary Punjab, Haryana, and Himachal Pradesh.

If the nation, and by extension sub-nations, are 'imagined communities'[104] whether based on language, religion, ethnicity, or territorial boundaries, there is as yet inadequate investigation into how this might have played out in 'banal'[105] ways. Not only flags, but historic objects (the dancing girl of Mohenjo-Daro or the bull capital of Sarnath), archives (the Patiala archives as I will show) and buildings (the Taj Mahal or the Qila Mubarak at Patiala) can also be reproductions of the nation for its citizens, thereby reiterating their citizenship. They form part of 'a whole complex of beliefs, assumptions, habits, representations and practices' that are reproduced 'in a banally mundane way, for the world of nations is the everyday world, the familiar terrain of contemporary times.'[106]

But as one commentator noted, "'After partition, the Punjabis disappeared. In West Punjab they became Pakistanis. In East Punjab they became Hindus and Sikhs. They also became Akalis and Congressmen. Arya Samajists and Jan Sanghis. Never Punjabis.'"[107] Later, they also became Haryanvis and Himachalis, in addition to constituting migrant populations in other parts of India. So, which was the nation being reproduced in a 'banal' fashion, using historic objects, archives, and buildings in reorganised Punjab, and for whom? What was the impact of Punjab's rapidly changing boundaries on its people's imagined identity, and the objects they used to fashion it?

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[103] Tensions continued amongst these three successor states over the capital Chandigarh, and jurisdiction over infrastructure and resources. J. S. Grewal, *The Sikhs*, pp. 205-209.
[104] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 2006, revised edn).
[105] Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism.*
[106] *Ibid.*, p. 6. I find this idea useful even though Billig's analysis is not of South Asia. It has also been shown to have its limitations, including the fact that national audiences are not homogenous, a point that this thesis addresses. See Michael Skey, 'The National in Everyday Life: A Critical Engagement with Michael Billig's Thesis of *Banal Nationalism*', *The Sociological Review,* 57:2 (2009), pp. 331-346.
[107] Rajinder Puri, 'What it's all About' in *Punjab in Indian Politics: Issues and Trends* ed. by Amrik Singh (Delhi: Ajanta Books International, 1985), p. 54 cited in Ishtiaq Ahmed, 'The 1947 Partition of Punjab: Arguments put Forth before the Punjab Boundary Commission by the Parties Involved' in *Region and Partition: Bengal, Punjab and the Partition of the Subcontinent* ed. by Ian Talbot and Gurharpal Singh (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 163-164.

The immediate result of the 1956 reorganisation was that it resolved the protracted wrangle that G. L. Chopra's successor as Keeper of the East Punjab Museum and Historical Record Office, V. S. Suri, had been involved in since 1951. A long-standing member of the department, Suri had worked his way up to the top job. Through patient and numerous letters written in a beautiful hand, he had endeavoured to reorganise and better still, relocate the East Punjab Museum and Archives to the new capital of Chandigarh, which he thought would be a more appropriate home — as well as being closer to power.[108] But PEPSU's merger put more options, resources and collections on the table.

The reorganised Punjab government scrapped the move to Chandigarh and combined the Records Offices and Museums at Shimla and Patiala under Suri's charge. It decided to house them at the (old) Moti Bagh (or pearl garden) Palace in Patiala,[109] which the Government bought 'for 30 lakhs or so'[110] from the Maharaja who, without the resources and responsibilities of a Rajpramukh on PEPSU's dissolution, found that he wished to dispose of it.[111]

While the princes continued to be key players in politics after partition and whilst their states' integration into India was underway, they *appear* to recede from prominence once their constitutional role disappeared.[112] Commentators have noted that the Government of India did not *need* to break its promise about their constitutional duties. It might have been advantageous to keep, since many rulers would have been better respected as governors; and it would have retained their goodwill.[113] Notable exceptions include politically active former rulers, or their wives, who chose to enter the democratic

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[108] I will discuss the relevance of location in the next chapter.
[109] Memorandum from the Director of Public Instruction, to Keeper Records to Government, Punjab-cum-Curator, Punjab Government Museum, Simla, 'Building Plans for Central State Archives', File B-XI 1954-1956 Basta 70, Punjab State Archives, Patiala.
[110] M. S. Randhawa to W. G. Archer, 16 March 1957, Archer Papers, Mss Eur F236/301, British Library.
[111] 'Building Plans for Central State Archives', p. 23. The posts of Rajpramukh and Upa-Rajpramukh came with an allowance over and above the holder's privy purse allowance. (See Ministry of States, *White Paper).* Yadavindra Singh then built the smaller New Moti Bagh palace, where the family still resides.
[112] Louise Tillin, *Remapping India*, p. 39.
[113] R. L. Handa, *History of Freedom Struggle in Princely States* (New Delhi: Central News Agency, 1968), pp. 366-368; V. P. Menon, *Integration*.

fray such as Gwalior and Patiala, and Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, first cousin to Maharaja Jagatjit Singh of Kapurthala and a prominent member of the Congress movement and India's first health minister after independence. Others — including Patiala — put their diplomatic skills to good use serving as ambassadors, and representatives to international organisations; distinguished themselves in the Indian armed forces, or at the very least, sport. It might appear that their 'integration' was more thorough as a result, but this might be worth questioning.

In Punjab, the tension between integration and independence continued to show. Echoing the Kapurthala incident (in which local politics pushed regional treasure towards display in a national showcase), Dr Ganda Singh, former Director of Archives of PEPSU, caused a hiccup less than a year later. He proposed that the entire PEPSU archives be gifted to the nation and deposited with the National Archives of India. Ganda Singh continued to eulogise Patiala's key role and sacrifices long after PEPSU's merger and reorganisation, through the platform of the Punjab History Conference, of which he was a key organiser (more on this later).[114] So although in keeping with his own agenda, this new line was unnecessary, as far as the department was concerned.

As head of reorganised Punjab's Records Offices and Museums, Suri rejected the proposal, considering it 'utterly unwarranted on archival or administrative principles.'[115] In his opinion, the 'archives of the defunct Pepsu State should form an integral part of the collections of records of the successor State and their custody and control should vest in the reorganised state of Panjab.'[116] The state appeared to be prepared to make the investment to 'set up a really good Museum because on building alone we have invested such a big amount in purchasing the Moti Bagh Palace. Obviously, the idea of the Government appears to be to have a Museum of the type we had at Lahore.'[117]

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[114] *Punjab History Conference, Second Session (October 28-30,1966),* pp. 1-4.
[115] V. S. Suri to the Director of Public Instruction, 15 April 1959, 'Building plans for Central State Archives', p. 79, File B-XI 1954-1956, Basta 70, Punjab State Archives, Patiala.
[116] *Ibid.* The Committee on Archival Legislation backed up this view in its 1959 report, reiterating that 'defunct' princely state records should be treated as an 'integral part of the archives of the States in which they have merged. Virendra Kumar (ed.), *Committees and Commissions in India 1947-73, Vol III: 1958-59* (Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 1975), p. 430.
[117] Administrative notes on Suri's proposal to upgrade the post to Director-cum-Curator from Keeper of Records-cum-Curator. 'Proposal for upgrading post of KR to Curator', p. 31, File 272, Punjab State Archives, Chandigarh (PDL reference FI-22695).

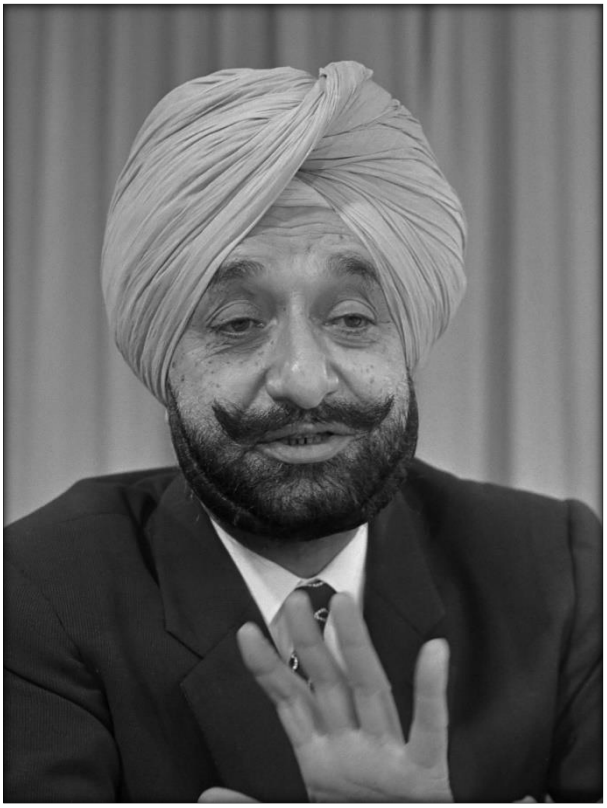

Fig 4.8: Maharaja Yadavindra Singh of Patiala as Ambassador to the Netherlands, 1971.[118]

[118] Rob Mieremet, Wikimedia Commons [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Yadvinder_Singh_Mahendra_Bahadur_(1971).jpg, accessed 14 July 2020] [https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/].

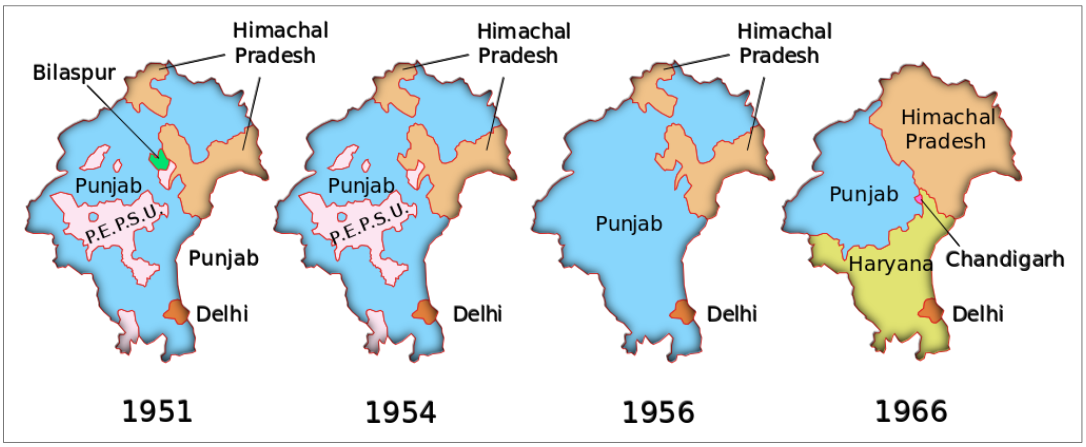

Fig 4.9: Schematic illustration of the division and redivision of East Punjab.[119]

[119] 'Punjab, 1951-1966', Furfur, Wikimedia Commons [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Punjab_1951-66.svg, accessed 14 July 2020] [https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/]. Map not to scale.

There is an elision here, between the function of Museum and Archive and what sort of collections were appropriate for each to hold, with officials using the terms interchangeably. Today, there is much fine-tuning of job descriptions to distinguish the differences between museums, libraries, and archives (and indeed the related disciplines of history, archaeology, and museology). But the reality is messier and more connected, despite continuing endeavours to refine and define. It leads to the important, if simple, methodological point that such distinctions are functional, not intrinsic. If we must be alert to how the arts of governance shape the archive,[120] it appears imperative to reflect on the dialogical process by which disciplinary boundaries and the postcolonial archive — along with museums and libraries — produce each other.

Punjab in Patiala, Patiala as Punjab

The move to Patiala took until 1959[121] and occasioned a complete overhaul. Until this point the museum had been restricted to being a 'historical' one. Now, the department opened an art museum alongside, both housed in the Sheesh Mahal (originally built as a pleasure palace on the grounds of the Moti Bagh Palace). The Art Museum became the main draw according to the annual administrative report, bringing in over 'seven thousand persons' in 1960-1961. The reason was:

> 'The landmarks in the cultural life of the people depicted [in the Art Museum] enabled them to have a peep into the past. They also provide great inspiration to students of Punjab History for advanced study and research in the history of the region.'[122]

Among the sources of inspiration was Yadavindra Singh's,

> 'magnificent collection of over 3,300 commemorative and decorative medals, military badges, swords and personal relics...[representing] almost every important

[120] Laura Ann Stoler, 'Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance', *Archival Science*, 2 (2002), pp. 87-109. For an overview of broader issues see Joan M. Schwartz and Terry Cook, 'Archives, Records, and Power: The Making of Modern Memory', *Archival Science*, 2 (2002), pp. 1-19.
[121] 'Administration Report 1959-1960', p. 1, Basta 167, Punjab State Archives, Patiala.
[122] 'Administration Report 1960-1961', p. 3, Basta 167, Punjab State Archives, Patiala.

> country and appear to have been brought together after persistent search from all over the world. A large number of them are brilliant and rare examples.'[123]

He had gifted the collection (inherited from his father) to the State Museum two years earlier — in fact, almost as soon as the Punjab government announced that the museum and archive were to be amalgamated at Patiala.[124] Yadavindra Singh was thus active in shaping the view of the past that the museum could construct: the medals referenced Punjab's martial heritage in general and the Sikhs in particular, and placed himself at the heart of it in more ways than one, since his former palace was the proposed location. What prompted an art museum, however, is less evident from the Historical Record Office's correspondence, but I suggest that it was a result of the growing interest in Pahari painting, which I will discuss in the next chapter.

The drive to collect, conserve, and canvass amongst the public for historical objects continued undiminished, this time under a scheme 'sponsored by the Government of India for preparation of a National Register of Records,' for which the 'State Government sanctioned an expenditure of Rs. 3000/-', and appointed a Surveyor.

> 'In the beginning most of the owners showed little enthusiasm for the project and were reluctant to declare any collections in their possession, [requiring] persistent efforts…to make them understand and appreciate the value and national importance of the scheme through personal letters and canvassing.'[125]

The assurance of free preservation on 'scientific lines' by the State Archives was critical to ensuring 'promising results'.[126] The transnational language of science, technology and progress enabled the postcolonial state to position itself amongst its peers globally; so if the museum or archive was 'scientifically' run, it acquired a veneer of

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123 *Indian Museums Review, 1957-1958* (New Delhi: Ministry of Scientific Research and Cultural Affairs, Government of India), p. 29.
124 *Indian Museums Review, 1957-1958*, p. 29.
125 'Administration Report 1960-1961', pp. 5-6.
126 *Ibid.*

modernity. But embedded within it are continuing colonial forms of knowledge that devalued archival standards of care in private or princely state archives.[127]

'The office had hardly established itself in a portion of the Motibagh, at Patiala, that the whole Estate was sold away by the State Government to the National Institute of Sports' and plans made to shift everything to Chandigarh.[128] Almost immediately, there were objections from several quarters, including Dr Bhai Jodh Singh, the Vice Chancellor of Punjabi University Patiala, which had just been inaugurated in 1962. He went straight to the Chief Minister, outraged at the 'move afoot by the Archives Department to shift to Chandigarh a portion of the State records, consisting of the Simla [records]…and the library with its collection of manuscripts.'[129] To him, reversing the decision to retain the Archives Department at Patiala meant, that 'the historical material therein' which was meant to be 'readily available to scholars of history for research and for rewriting the history of the Punjab' would cease to be so. Convenient access is one thing, but he must have known that historians from his university could have consulted the archives elsewhere too, a point Suri later made in his response.

The Vice Chancellor continued:

> 'The records of the eight princely states were concentrated at Patiala on the formation of the Patiala and the E. P. States Union in 1948. These form the main bulk of the collection of the Archives Department and deal exclusively with this area. And the same is the case with the Chamber records which came to be produced during the life of the Chamber of Princes, whose Chancellors during the greater part of its life, were the Maharajas of Patiala. Thus, the whole record, Simla and the Pepsu, in custody of the Archives Department is one inseparable unity and its division, on however small a scale, will create handicaps for Punjab research scholars, particularly of the Punjabi University, which, through its Department of Punjab Historical Studies, is specializing in the history of the Punjab and is writing it anew.'[130]

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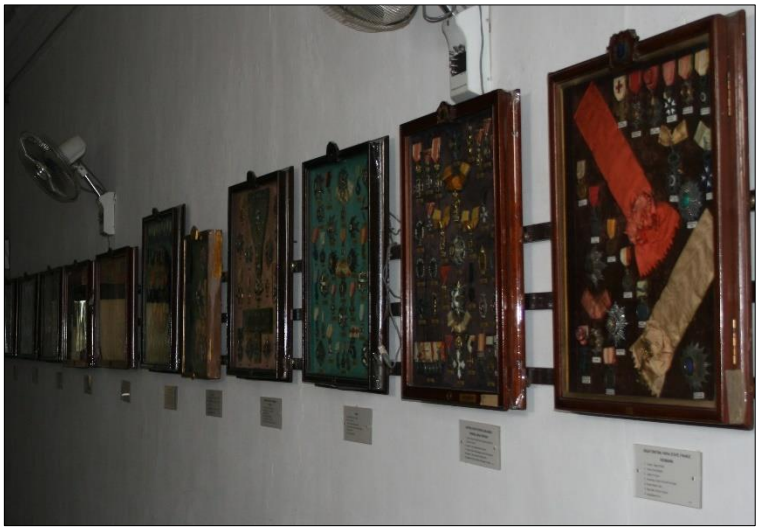
127 Maxine Berg, 'Useful Knowledge, "Industrial Enlightenment", and the Place of India', *Journal of Global History,* 8:1 (2013), pp. 117-141; Norbert Peabody, 'Knowledge Formation in Colonial India' in *India and the British Empire* ed. by Douglas M. Peers and Nandini Gooptu (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 75-99.
128 'Administration Report 1960-1961', p. 2.
129 Copy of letter from the Vice Chancellor, Punjabi University Patiala to Chief Minister, Punjab, 17 October 1963. 'Shifting of State Archives and Museum to Chandigarh', pp. 71-73, File B-13/62-65 Basta 118, Punjab State Archives, Patiala.
130 *Ibid.*

Fig 4.10: Façade of the Old Moti Bagh Palace, now the National Institute of Sports[131]

[131] Image: National Institute of Sports Website [www.patiala.nic.in, accessed 5 May 2020].

Fig 4.11: The Sheesh Mahal at the rear of the Old Moti Bagh Palace grounds, approached from the latter via a suspension bridge over a tank. Run as a Punjab Government museum, it has been closed for renovation for several years at the time of writing The 'mirror' room from which it gets its name, is on the ground floor of the central projecting portion.[132]



[132] Image: © DRONAH Foundation. Reproduced with permission.

Figs 4.12 & 4.13: The walls of the upper floor were lined with case after case of the superb Patiala medal collection, acquired by Maharaja Bhupinder Singh, mainly from Spink & Co., London.[133]

The rest of this letter, highlighting Patiala's recent history and regional importance provides a clue to his motivations: he saw Patiala as the cultural capital or heart of Punjab and thus the proper home for the State Archives. Yadavindra Singh's conspicuous and continuing role as cultural patron through the museum was one contributing factor — it allowed Jodh Singh to stake his claim on behalf of the city, regardless of whether he agreed with or shared the Maharaja's agenda.

The Vice Chancellor's crusading tone, his desire to 'rewrite' the history of Punjab, and tangential support for Patiala's cultural position (in addition to his University's) can also be better understood in light of his background. He was a prominent member of the reformist Singh Sabha movements founded across undivided Punjab from 1873 onwards, and a participant in Sikh politics both before and after independence. Bhai Jodh Singh gained a reputation as a theologian and expert on Sikh scripture, teaching the subjects at the Khalsa College Amritsar, from which he retired as Principal. In 1962, he had emerged from retirement to become the first Vice Chancellor of Punjabi University.[134] 'The leaders of the Sikh associations came from all sections of the Sikh community,' which included the 'Princes of Nabha, Faridkot and Kapurthala' as representatives of the ruling families.[135] Thus, in the course of his educational, political and activist life, Jodh Singh would have had occasion to find himself espousing the same causes as the Sikh princes.

Even if the dream of PEPSU as a Sikh homeland had foundered, there was no reason Patiala, its former capital and once the premier Sikh state, could not be its heartland. I speculate; but Yadavindra Singh's and Jodh Singh's agendas and motivations appear to align. The new Department of Punjab Historical Studies Jodh Singh referred

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[133] Images: © DRONAH Foundation. Reproduced with permission. I am also familiar with the building and the collection, having worked with DRONAH on a planning project to renovate it, for the Punjab Government.

[134] 'Jodh Singh, Bhai', *The Sikh Encyclopedia* [https://www.thesikhencyclopedia.com/modern-scholars-of-sikhism/jodh-singh-bhai, accessed 18 September, 2019]. The online encyclopaedia is meant to be based on the version published by Punjabi University Patiala. Also see J. S. Grewal, *The Sikhs*, pp. 144-145.

[135] J. S. Grewal, *The Sikhs*, pp. 144-145.

to, was being set up by none other than Dr Ganda Singh, distinguished historian of Punjab and former Director of the PEPSU Archives; he too had stepped out of retirement for the purpose. Naturally, he would have wanted to keep records within easy reach; and it is conceivable he briefed his Vice Chancellor along those lines. But just a decade before, he had suggested gifting the entire archives to the nation. Why might he have changed his mind?

In 1956, Ganda Singh had retired, and the PEPSU-East Punjab merger had taken place; that chapter of experimentation in alternate national imaginaries (whether as a federated princely state, or princely *and* Sikh state) was closed. Patiala had had no University at that time which could promote research on Punjab's history. It is also relevant to consider what *sort* of history Ganda Singh was interested to promote. A glance at a range of his works published in a 1976 volume of essays in his honour reveals a quantity of original research and compilations in four languages (English, Punjabi, Urdu, Persian). One way or the other, they deal with the history of the Sikhs, rather than the diversity that 'Punjab's' history would entail.

Ganda Singh was a member of numerous Indian (non-Punjabi) and international learned societies, as well as national schemes such as the Indian Historical Records Commission of the Government of India from 1938-56.[136] His public pronouncements suggest that he believed in the idea of Punjab being a part of India, was not a language chauvinist at least when it came to scholarly pursuits,[137] and had an all-encompassing conception of Punjab's history that stretched back to its archaeological heritage. Yet, it is possible that it was also coloured by his own predilections towards the Sikhs, or at least inflected by political tensions within the region. So, it is just conceivable that he

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136 Harbans Singh and N. Gerald Barrier (eds.), *Punjab Past and Present: Essays in Honour of Dr Ganda Singh* (Patiala: Punjabi University, 1976), p. xv.

137 He was concerned about the reducing language ability around him and 'regretfully hinted at the increasing reluctance among young students and scholars to take to the study of and the research in the mediaeval period…due to the neglect of Persian language in our schools and colleges, as also of Urdu, on account of narrow communalism developing here and there in the country and linguistic fanaticism resulting therefrom…however…the Punjabi University proposes to make the working knowledge of Persian essential for those taking up medieval period papers… ', *Punjab History Conference, Second Session (October 28-30,1966)*, p. 5.

borrowed Kapurthala's tactics with his own former department, and applied them to his new circumstances.

By this reasoning, in 1956, rather than languishing as a section of a consolidated archive of PEPSU and East Punjab, gifting the entire PEPSU archives to the nation might have made sense. Retained at Delhi, it would have greater visibility, distinction, and use, putting princely, Punjabi, and *Sikh* history symbolically at the heart of the nation. In 1963, with his own department of Punjab historical studies established at Punjabi University at Patiala, the situation had changed. Rather than send the archives to the regional centre at Chandigarh, Jodh Singh (doubtless with Ganda Singh's support) sought to retain the archives at Patiala. But Suri could see no reason why,

> 'the entire assets of the State Archives must be retained at Patiala. The Geological and Archaeological finds do not come under the perview [sic] of the Archives. Similarly old coins and paintings are collected in the Museum. It has already been decided that the State Museum is to be set up at Chandigarh and a new building therefore is under construction…It is…not clear what is meant in the letter by the expression that some particular series of papers pertain to "our part of the Punjab". The position of the preserves of the Punjab State Archives, which has to cater to the needs of the State as a whole, should not be viewed from any regional or local point of view. Even if the Government decides to set up the State Archives at Chandigarh, the capital of the State and the headquarters of the Government, the contents of the record office will still be located in the cis-Satluj area like Patiala itself. It need not, therefore be laboured to prove that some particular records relate to a particular area and should be retained at a particular place. Obviously the State Archives will contain records and papers pertaining to all parts of the States. The essential point in their centralization under one organization is to enable the students/ scholars from all over the State to consult them at one place.'[138]

It is evident that Suri favoured Chandigarh because it was the capital, but it could also be interpreted as a comment and a reaction to the divisive politics pulling Punjab apart. At the same time, he sought to reassure that Patiala would continue to have a role, although he was noncommittal about the details. And it is worth noting that while the Archives did not care for geological or archaeological materials (which Suri implies were

[138] 'Shifting of State Archives and Museum to Chandigarh', p. 85.

Museum subjects), it was within the mandate of the Museum Advisory Committee to decide the future location of the State Archives. It was inconclusive, or temporary at best. Chandigarh seemed logical for administrative purposes, and the Committee did not wish to divide the Archives. Yet, given the tough logistics of moving things to Chandigarh for the 'foreseeable future on account of the cost of the new [Museum] building and the difficult position of accommodation at the Capital', the committee 'recommended that the Archives should continue at Patiala' whilst accounting for its needs in the ongoing planning for Chandigarh.[139]

How much did any of this matter to the Patiala public? According to Justice G. L. Chopra, President of the PEPSU Welfare Association, a great deal. He too wrote to the Chief Minister:

> 'You will realise that the entire old historical record and various other relics in the archives Department have an intimate association with Patiala and its neighbouring areas. It would not be fair to remove relics of such great historical importance of this Region and shift the same to Chandigarh. I do concede that Punjab Government would like the Chandigarh Museum to be properly equipped with old historical documents and other articles bearing on the history of Punjab but at the same time I feel that it is not a wise and whole-some [sic] policy to deprive an important city of its old relics and shift the same to a new place. The public feels very strongly on this issue…'[140]

So did the Maharaja of Patiala. He was no longer Rajpramukh but had enough clout and personal interest to intervene in favour of a worthy museum (another elision!) at Patiala, and he elicited more than an official written response. The Chief Minister directed the Chief Secretary to 'look into the case regarding the setting up of a good Museum at Patiala. The Curator submitted a detailed note on the organisation of a regional Museum at Patiala.'[141] The Chief Secretary then visited the site, suggested

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[139] *Ibid.*
[140] Justice G. L. Chopra, President of the PEPSU Welfare Association, Patiala to the Chief Minister Punjab, 17 June 1965, *Ibid.*, p. 89.
[141] 'Punjab State Archives and Archaeology and Museum Administration Report 1965-1966', p. 9, Basta 160, Punjab State Archives, Patiala.

alternatives, and referred it to the Finance Secretary, but formal orders were still awaited when the administration report of 1965-1966 went to press.[142]

Did Yadavindra Singh face a conflict of interest in this matter? If so, one wonders how he resolved it. The mid-1960s were turbulent times in Punjab for multiple reasons. One was the intractable problem of a Punjabi-speaking state, which had regained traction after the brief lull in 1956. Sant Fateh Singh, leader of a new faction of the Akali Dal, now spearheaded the movement and threatened a fast unto death and self-immolation, if Punjabi-speakers were denied what the Government of India had granted to other linguistic groups. He was persuaded to call it off at the last minute,[143] but only in deference to a national crisis at his doorstep: the war with Pakistan from August-September 1965.

Punjab was trifurcated in 1966. Haryana was hived off, and the Kangra Valley merged with Himachal Pradesh, but any euphoria was short lived as the successor states proceeded to squabble over assets, resources, and the capital: Chandigarh. The Government of India intervened to designate the city a Union Territory and a shared capital between Punjab and Haryana, but Maharaja Yadavindra Singh was involved in the many rounds of claim and counter-claim, pushing for Chandigarh to be given to Punjab.[144] To what extent did his support for a Punjabi-speaking (really, Sikh) state and its claims to Chandigarh as capital, conflict with his desire to ensure Patiala's stature, and by extension, re-inscribe his own? How far did he realise that the cream of the museum collections would be sent to Chandigarh, and that Patiala would not be the unrivalled home of the State Archive and Museum, and thus primary custodian of its past? We will never know for sure, but these questions are worth pondering.

In any case, all was not lost for Patiala. The pressure from various quarters and at different times from 1962-1965 had paid off, and Suri (to whom the Chief Minister had referred the matter) reassured Justice Chopra of the PEPSU Welfare Association that:

> 'While the State Museum and the State Archives are proposed to be located at Chandigarh all cultural relics and records relating to the erstwhile Pepsu region in general and former princely State of Patiala in particular would be retained at

[142] *Ibid.*
[143] But repeated this tactic on other occasions. J. S. Grewal, *The Sikhs*, pp. 202-204.
[144] File 17/269/69-SR, Ministry of Home Affairs, National Archives of India.

> Patiala. A Regional Museum containing all the relics of historical importance of this region will be retained at Patiala. Similarly, the records of all the covenanting States of Pepsu will also remain at Patiala and will comprise the regional record office. Thus it is not at all contemplated to remove any object pertaining to the former Pepsu and Patiala States. It is not intended to deprive the city and the Pepsu region of any objects which might believed [sic] to be of sentimental significance for the Region.'[145]

It is perhaps a testament to the speed with which political realities shifted that Suri seems to have been unprepared for the trifurcation of Punjab and the loss of a number of objects — largely the Gandhara sculptures and Pahari paintings — which had been temporarily shifted to the Punjab Art School building whilst the Chandigarh Museum was being readied. 'After the reorganisation of the States,' he recorded sadly, 'the assets have been taken under their charge by the U. T. Chandigarh and thus the State of Punjab has been deprived of its assets as well as the building constructed for the State Museum.'[146] There was no alternative but to recover and refocus attention and energy on Patiala — this partition too, thus had an ambiguous legacy. The Baradari Palace was 'permanently allotted for the offices of Archives and Museum and these offices were shifted from Sheesh Mahal, Old Moti Bagh Palace Building on 14th November, 1966'[147] and the display was overhauled. V. S. Suri retired in July 1968, two months after the forfeited Chandigarh Museum was inaugurated, in May. The loss still rankles with Punjab's museums department.[148]

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145 Memo from V. S. Suri to The Education Commissioner and Secretary to Government Punjab, 30 September 1965, in response to letter from Justice Chopra, 'Shifting of State Archives and Museum to Chandigarh', p. 91.
146 'Punjab State Archives and Archaeology and Museum Administration report 1966-1967', p. 9, Basta 160, Punjab State Archives, Patiala.
147 *Ibid.*, p. i.
148 Personal communication from a range of people in Punjab museums and archives whilst working on a project to create a cultural heritage policy for Punjab in 2013.

Constructing Histories of Punjab

The first session of the Punjab History Conference was held at Punjabi University Patiala in 1966. Dr Ganda Singh was the Conference's chief architect, his declared objective,

> 'to emphasize the importance of the study of regional history and to create an all round historical awareness… [of the] past of the Punjab, which was once a cradle of one of the earliest known civilizations of the world [and had] always played a very prominent role in the various currents and cross-currents of Indian History.'[149]

The conference emphasised the importance of 'regional organisations where alone was it possible to go to every town and every village' to collect historical 'details', which when 'studied, compared and contrasted' would reconstruct 'a most interesting and convincing image of India'. 'Systematically' and 'scientifically' doing so, it was felt, would 'ultimately strengthen the forces of integration rather than disintegration.'[150]

His facts were correct, but what is fascinating about this account (and what follows) is the tensions and politically inflected agenda it reveals. For one thing, the timing of the conference — 1966, the year Punjab was trifurcated — is striking, coincidental though it might have been. It was a charged moment: the price for gaining a Punjabi-speaking (and majority Sikh) state entailed Punjab being rent asunder once more, even as it might have represented 'liberation' for the Hindi and Pahari-speaking regions. Post-1966 Punjab politics remained volatile for several decades, over and above the disputes over assets with neighbouring Haryana and Himachal Pradesh (and even Rajasthan in the matter of river waters). Areas of tension between the Centre and the State — over development, river waters, finances, and a general feeling of Punjab being short-changed — threw up a variety of proposals and political movements.

In a remarkable echo of the Union Government's negotiations with princely states over their accession, they included 'a separate constitution for the Punjab…the introduction of a genuinely federal system, with defence, foreign affairs, communications

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149 *Punjab History Conference, First Session (November 12-14, 1965),* p. 1.
150 *Ibid.*

and currency as the great prerogatives of the Union Government.'[151] It is all the more ironic considering that PEPSU had been a pilot for just such a relationship between state and centre. So, in emphasising the value of regional studies, Ganda Singh had to ensure that it did not appear to be at the cost of the nation's integrity.

Reciting the origins of the conference was a ritual throughout his years on the dais until his death in 1985. He recalled that he had first had the idea in the 1930s, which had taken shape as the Sikh History Society. Inaugurated in 1945 by Princess Bamba Sutherland (daughter of Maharaja Duleep Singh, the last ruler of Ranjit Singh's kingdom, deposed by the British in 1849), it was the precursor to the Punjab History conference.[152] Patiala's history, woven into a discussion on Punjab's place in the history of India were recurring themes in his many speeches.[153] According to him Patiala 'was one of the first states to accede to the Union of India' thereby making 'a notable contribution to the unity and integrity of the country'[154] (V. P. Menon credits Gwalior and Baroda, while acknowledging Patiala's efforts at shepherding fellow-princes towards accession[155]). And yet, it was 'reduced to one of the eight constituent states of' PEPSU, only to be followed by further loss of prestige when 'PEPSU was merged with the Punjab, and Patiala became the headquarters of a district, little knowing that in ten years' time those interests would be greatly jeopardised by the distribution of its territories among the new states of Haryana and Himachal Pradesh.'[156] One of the things such speeches accomplished was that they retained the princely states (especially Patiala, where the conference was held) in the public eye, and reiterated their national and regional significance through their contributions, whether as patrons of art, or by their political sacrifice.

Patiala's 'pioneering' role provided the opening to speak of the history of Punjab as more than 'regional history in the narrow sense of the word', but rather 'the history of the Indian sub-continent', which according to Ganda Singh, began 'in the Punjab.' Once again, he mobilised his facts, listing the archaeological discoveries:

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151 J. S. Grewal, *The Sikhs*, p. 212, *passim,* pp. 205-227.
152 *Punjab History Conference, First Session (November 12-14, 1965)*, p. 7.
153 *Punjab History Conference, Second Session (October 28-30,1966),* pp. 1-4.
154 *Ibid.*
155 V. P. Menon, *Integration*, p.122.
156 *Punjab History Conference, Second Session (October 28-30,1966),* pp. 1-4.

> 'in the Soan Valley between the Indus…and the Jhelum…Recent discoveries in the Kangra district, in the Shiwalak hills of the Punjab, and at Rupar …and other places in addition to Harappa and Mohen-jo-Daro, [showing]…clear indications of the continuity of human existence and of material development of the early man throughout the ages in the Punjab.'[157]

The Indus Valley was proof, according to him, of indigenous Punjabi urban civilisation; and it had been 'the stout and stubborn opposition' from Punjabis that thwarted 'the world-conqueror Alexander the Great'. Another distinction was that the region had seen 'the advent of Islam' in the subcontinent and,

> 'gave birth to a number of socio-religious movements, the most important of them being that of the Sikhs who have contributed many a valuable chapter to the general history of India.'[158]

Stretching at one time from Tibet to Sindh and the Khyber pass to the Jamuna, and representing the last bastion (meaning, Ranjit Singh's kingdom) against the British, the Punjab, he declared, 'was the gift of the Sikhs to India', underwritten by their suffering 'the most during the holocausts of 1947 as a result of the partition of the country'. Ganda Singh thought these examples served to illustrate that 'the history of the Punjab is in no way an isolated regional history' but was instead one of the 'detailed chapters of the general history of India'. In this, he included the princely states and noted, 'most of them were important patrons of art and learning.'[159]

It was a breath-taking list of claims, but some of them are arresting: the geographical spread of the Punjab he invoked;[160] the explicit identification of Punjab's greatest moments with the Sikhs[161] and their princes (Ranjit Singh; Patiala's leading role);

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157 *Ibid.*
158 *Ibid.*
159 *Ibid.*
160 It is unsurprising, therefore, that participation was encouraged from 'greater' Punjab, such as Himachal Pradesh and Kashmir *Punjab History Conference, Fifth Session (March 8-10, 1970)* (Patiala: Punjabi University, 1971), p. iv.
161 See previous chapter on Sikh territorial imaginaries.

the notion that the region was a Sikh gift to India; and the echoes of Patel's words at PEPSU's inauguration.[162]

The theme for the thirteenth session was 'Agrarian History of the Punjab' inaugurated by Dr M. S. Randhawa, former civil servant, and agricultural expert. 'In his inaugural address [he] traced the history of agriculture all over the world', while emphasising 'the importance of Punjab…one of the original habitat of man but also the area where agriculture began earlier than elsewhere.'[163] A wide range of disciplines were represented within the chronological framework of the conference (Ancient, Medieval and Modern periods of Punjab's history), including a short paper on 'Kangra School of Art and the Sikh Paintings'. The author, D. S. Dhillon, quoted the art historian W. G. Archer amongst others to position Pahari paintings as a predecessor to Sikh art, thus enfolding it within the umbrella of Sikh heritage.[164]

I will discuss Randhawa, Archer, Pahari painting and its relevance to the history and politics of Punjab in greater detail in the following chapters. The point here is that, whether by touting its primacy in agriculture, archaeology or art, and despite the overt pride expressed, what emerges is a strong sense of the need to rehabilitate Punjab — because, as I have suggested earlier, of the violence of partition and the chaos of its politics — much of it through its recent princely heritage. The second detail to flag is the existence of networks of scholars and administrators (here, Ganda Singh, Randhawa and Archer; but also Chopra and Suri) who were committed to the idea of Punjab's greatness, and who shaped a vision of it for others in accordance with this view.

The above account highlights fundamental and hitherto unexplored questions, that could enrich our thinking about the region and nation in the early years of independent India. What impact did Punjab's changing boundaries, and the diverse ways in which actors interpreted them, have on imagining the Punjabi 'nation'? What claims to culture,

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[162] Subsequent scholarship has demonstrated the wide-ranging nature of the tragedies of partition which encompassed many more communities and wider geographies than just the Sikhs and Punjab. Selected examples include Joya Chatterji, *The Spoils of Partition* and Uttara Shahani, 'Sind and the Partition of India'.

[163] S. S. Bal, 'Preface' in *Punjab History Conference, Thirteenth Session (March 2-4, 1979)* (Patiala: Punjabi University, 1980).

[164] *Punjab History Conference, Eighteenth Session (December 2-4, 1983)* (Patiala: Punjabi University, 1985), pp. 129-132.

history and art did the boundaries allow? What kind of Punjab were these claims used to construct, and for whom? How was it contested, and what can that tell us about alternate national imaginaries in postcolonial India?

In addition to competition between the region and nation, or the princely states and the Government of India, the legacy of Maharaja Ranjit Singh as a factor in regional politics and identity at this time has not been adequately examined. The emphasis on acquiring Persian texts and records relating to the Lahore court was articulated in East Punjab as recompense for the loss of Lahore, and material evidence of East Punjab's connection to its culture.[165] But how did this position the Sikh rulers of PEPSU in general, and Maharaj Yadavindra Singh of Patiala in particular? Having prioritised political survival over their common faith, several had historically allied with the British against Ranjit Singh. Any dispute over who was the pre-eminent Sikh leader in the subcontinent disappeared when Ranjit Singh's territories were annexed, leaving the field clear for Patiala to capture in due course. Susan Stronge notes that the patronage of the remaining Sikh courts was essential for artistic production to continue in the aftermath of the British annexation. 'Patiala [especially] followed the model that had been provided by the greatest of all the Sikh rulers, Maharaja Ranjit Singh'.[166] It was not only a model to emulate, but one with which to compete.

While occasioning nostalgia for an undivided homeland (epitomised by Ranjit Singh's court), the physical severance from Lahore and the concentration of Sikhs in Indian Punjab provided, in fact, an opportunity. Patiala in particular was able to consolidate his own position, to re-centre the Sikh national imaginary through the politics of cultural display. Seen in this context, Yadavindra Singh's keenness to address the plastering makes sense: the Patiala museum represented cultural capital. Owning fine art objects demonstrated his refinement; donating them to public institutions showed his democratic spirit, and his role as a custodian. It projected and perpetuated his position as a regional and national leader to both Sikh and non-Sikh audiences. It is telling that he continued to voice his opinions about a museum for Punjab and pushed for it (and the State archives) to stay in Patiala.

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[165] See previous chapter.
[166] Susan Stronge (ed.), *The Arts of the Sikh Kingdoms* (London: V&A Publications, 1999), p. 11.

What is remarkable is that this *very same* category of princely asset was an instant resource for the regional and national governments in India, both before and after the merger of PEPSU. This was notwithstanding the fact that when making settlements with rulers over their private property, the Government of India *required* them to 'preserve for the nation objects of historical importance like rare manuscripts, paintings, arms etc…in Museums inside the States concerned', or if kept in private custody, to allow 'scholars, students and others interested' to have regulated access.[167] In addition to the PEPSU resources that it acquired in time, East Punjab also had recourse to records from three small states merged into it — Dujana, Loharu and Pataudi[168] — and whose historical materials, as a consequence, the Indian Historical Records Commission directed it to preserve.[169] But over and above this, the language of preservation and the need for rescue was a well-established colonial trope that the Indian state continued to deploy —one could not rely on the princes. The irony lies in the fact that this was true, but for another reason: the state could not rely on their fading into oblivion. On the contrary, by harnessing its powers of art patronage and cultural display, princely India has retained its place at the heart of the regional and national imaginary.

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[167] Ministry of States, *White Paper*, p. 65.
[168] V. P. Menon, *Integration*, p. 308.
[169] G. L. Chopra to Chief Secretary, 16 December 1949, 'Tour programme of KR', p. 49.

Fig 4.14: Maharaja Ranjit Singh.[170]

[170] Image: © Victoria & Albert Museum, Museum number IS.112-1953.

Fig 4.15: This life-size statue of Maharaja Ranjit Singh was unveiled at Lahore Fort on 27 June 2019 on his 180th birthday, to a mixed reception. It is evident that Ranjit Singh remains a potent figure today. He would have been more so in the mid-twentieth century.[171]

171 Image: Ali Usman Qasmi, 'Is Ranjit Singh's Statue in Lahore Worth Celebrating?' *Dawn,* 28 August 2019 [https://www.dawn.com/news/1491672, accessed 15 May 2020].

V

COLLECTING FOR PUNJAB
IN CONTEST WITH HIMACHAL PRADESH

Fig 5.1: The Punjab Museum, later the Chandigarh Museum (officially the Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh).[1]

[1] Image: Author.

Introduction

The politics of the Punjab across the divide of partition is now an established area of enquiry. But we have only begun to think about the conflicts and tensions over heritage that took place, because of the *subsequent* political changes within the wider region of Indian Punjab. And how did heritage and regional politics seep into each other? These are the issues that animate this chapter.

Punjab is unusual for having been remade and made more than once within two short decades. After 1947, what remained of Punjab in India was a mosaic for some time. As we saw in the previous chapter, the princely states of Patiala, Kapurthala, Jind, Nabha, Faridkot, Malerkotla, Kalsia and Nalagarh formed the Patiala and East Punjab States Union (PEPSU) in 1948. It was a remarkable experiment full of other possible national imaginaries, in the service of which, the PEPSU princes harnessed museum collections.

Meanwhile, the Hill States of Chamba, Mandi, Suket, Sirohi (the Shimla Hill States or the Punjab Hill States, revealing the inclination and/ or awareness of the writer or speaker) formed Himachal Pradesh. The Kangra Valley between them remained a part of Punjab. In 1956, PEPSU merged with East Punjab (which surrounded it) and in 1966, from these fragments, contemporary Punjab, Haryana, and Himachal Pradesh emerged.[2]

Building on the previous chapter, I now explore the politics and agendas of collecting for the Punjab Museum (by now the Chandigarh Museum), foregrounding the individuals and networks that underlie them. I analyse the resulting impact and implications for the Museum's narrative, focussing on Pahari painting. What effect did Chandigarh's changed status have? Envisioned as a *Punjab* Museum, what version of Punjab did or *could* it represent, under the circumstances? Were its claims contested; if so, how? How does Himachal Pradesh, the source of Pahari painting, feature in this story? Demonstrating the seminal role of art and the museum in imagining Punjab and India, I bring a new body of material — museums — to our understanding of the 'many nationalisms'[3] in South Asia.

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[2] Gursharan Singh, *History of PEPSU: Patiala and East Punjab States Union (1948-1956)* (Delhi: Konark Publishers, 1991); Mian Goverdhan Singh, *History of Himachal Pradesh* (Delhi: Yugbodh Publishing House, 1982).

[3] Joya Chatterji, 'Nationalisms in India, 1857-1947' in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Nationalism* ed. by John Breuilly (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 242-264.

Indian Art History: A Brief Overview

The discipline of Indian art history is a twentieth century invention that developed in response to India's colonial experience. According to British views, Indian art was static, frozen in an ancient past. India's decaying and abandoned buildings (to European eyes; in fact, many were neither) was further evidence, if proof were needed. Partha Mitter's argument is now an established one: that when considering non-European art, the British saw what they wanted to see, in turn determined by what they were able to see. In other words, conditioned by their own ways of seeing the world which assured that all others would lead to horrors and damnation, they saw Indian art as monstrous and barbaric.[4] A relish for ruins also happened to be a contemporary European art trend, then undergoing the famous moment of the picturesque.[5] It is unsurprising for societies to regard the unfamiliar as uncivilised, but given British political ascendancy in the subcontinent, their views prevailed. India's art and architecture were interpreted to fit British aesthetic principles, regardless of the facts.[6]

Indian art history came of age with the 'Art of India and Pakistan' exhibition held from November 1947-February 1948 at the Royal Academy in London.[7] It represented the pivotal moment when the 'colonial-antiquarian' interpretation was challenged by both the 'nationalist-metaphysicalist', and a 'third position…differentiable from [those] hitherto identified', that was keen to 'to promote Indian art as "art"' with concern for its

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[4] Partha Mitter, *Much Maligned Monsters: History of European Reactions to Indian Art* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977). Also see Parul Pandya Dhar (ed.), *Indian Art History: Changing Perspectives* (New Delhi: D. K. Printworld/ National Museum Institute, 2011).

[5] Giles Tillotson explores the picturesque from the English artist's perspective, and their representations of India in *The Artificial Empire: The Indian Landscapes of William Hodges* (Richmond: Curzon, 2000).

[6] For example, an eighteenth-century British traveller visiting the Jantar Mantar at Varanasi remarked on their remarkable condition given their great antiquity. In fact, it was less than thirty years since the patron Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh II had died in 1743. It is revealing that his local informant was poorly informed, hinting at the loss of knowledge. Vibhuti Sachdev and Giles Tillotson, *Jaipur City Palace* (New Delhi: Roli Books, 2008), p. 107.

[7] Previously explored in Chapter II of this thesis.

formal and material qualities.[8] I discuss the aesthetic discourse of these years and its relationship with the acquisition of Indian art collections in India and abroad in greater detail in the next chapter. But the context of the collections and collectors of Pahari painting for the Chandigarh Museum is relevant to the account that follows.

The Collectors Behind the Collections

On 19 May 1953, the Deputy Commissioner Ambala District wrote to the Keeper of the Indian Section of the Victoria & Albert Museum. The letter came out of the blue. Its author, M. S. Randhawa, got straight to the point, in keeping with his reputation for bluntness:

> 'Dear Mr. Archer, I have read with great interest your book titled "Indian Paintings [sic] in the Punjab Hills". I have been interested in Kangra painting since my arrival in the Punjab in 1948, and during my tours of Kangra District in connection with Rural Rehabilitation work in 1950 & 1951, I visited all places where Kangra art of painting was practised. I was particularly anxious to locate the collections of paintings belonging to Sansar Chand and as a lover of Kangra Art you will be delighted to learn that a number of beautiful paintings are still in the valley. I have been able to purchase for the Chandigarh Art Gallery a set of paintings, 110 in number, showing the life of Shiva and Parvati from Mian Ram Singh, a descendant of Sansar Chand who lives at Bhawarna. I have also been able to discover a number of very beautiful Radha Krishna paintings with Raja Dhruvdev Chand of Lambagraon. Another remarkable collection of paintings is with Raja Baldeo Singh of Guler. Detailed examination of these paintings has confirmed your theory that Kangra art of painting took its birth at Guler….'[9]

Mohinder Singh Randhawa (1909-1986) was a member of the Indian Civil Service from 1934 until his retirement in 1968. His academic background was in the sciences. He took his doctorate from Punjab University in 1956 on the strength of his collected

[8] Kavita Singh, 'Museums and the Making of the Indian Art Historical Canon' in *Towards a New Art History: Studies in Indian Art* ed. by Shivaji K. Panikkar, Parul D. Mukherji, Deeptha Achar (New Delhi: D. K. Printworld, 2003), p. 344.
[9] M. S. Randhawa to W. G. Archer, Archer Papers, Mss Eur F236/301, British Library.

publications on a species of water algae.[10] Randhawa served the Government of India on the Indian Council for Agricultural Research, and advised the Natural Resources Planning Commission. He became Chairman of the committee to plan Chandigarh city in 1955, the Financial Commissioner of the city in 1966, and retired as the Chief Commissioner of Chandigarh in 1968. He is best remembered in Punjab today for his contributions to village development, agriculture, and farming. Indeed, some refer to him as the father of the Green Revolution[11] and credit him with developing the Punjab Agricultural University in Ludhiana, where he served from 1968-1976 as the Vice Chancellor. He remained committed to agriculture in theory as well as practice, farming land outside Chandigarh, where he lived from 1966.[12]

It is more germane to this thesis that he was also a prolific author of books on painting from the region known as the Punjab Hills — i.e. the hills of the Western Himalayas that bordered the north and east of the Punjab plain. His detailed exploration of 'Pahari' painting (literally, of the hills) as it became known, has been acknowledged as the first serious study since A. K. Coomaraswamy's preliminary enquiries in 1909.[13] Randhawa wrote *The Krishna Legend in Pahari Painting* in 1956, and a further seventeen volumes (a few in collaboration), most about Pahari painting and his pursuit of them. This was in addition to articles, reviews, and books on the folk songs of Punjab and Haryana. He first visited the Kangra Valley on official duty in connection with a dispute over the allocation of land to refugees (he was a great believer in the value of 'on-the-

[10] He published 32 papers between 1934-1946. M. S. Randhawa to W. G. Archer, 27 September 1956, Archer Papers, Mss Eur F236/301.

[11] This is despite its contested value in hindsight, especially the impact on the environment. For example, see Vandana Shiva, *The Violence of the Green Revolution* (Dehra Dun: Research Foundation for Science and Ecology, 1989). Randhawa's own account was published only fifteen years before this. M. S. Randhawa, *Green Revolution: A Case Study of Punjab* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1974).

[12] Though Randhawa acquired the land and built the house earlier, he and his family moved there in June 1966. It was Randhawa's wife, Iqbal Kaur who actively managed the farm since Randhawa was busy with his official duties. M. S. Randhawa, *Aap Beeti* (New Delhi: Navyug Publishers, 2014 reprint), pp. 402, 407; Chapter 57.

[13] Art historians today speak of 'Pahari' rather than 'Kangra' painting. Randhawa and his contemporaries tended to use 'Kangra', reflecting their view that the Kangra Valley was the birthplace for this style of painting, although the term properly refers only to a small portion of the region encompassed by 'Pahari'. They also use the terms interchangeably. I will use 'Pahari' unless quoting from sources.

spot' assessments). This trip rekindled a love for the mountains that he had nursed since his youth, and he later characterised his lifelong engagement with Pahari painting and their environs as a source of solace from his relentless schedule.[14]

He met his old friend the painter Sobha Singh at Andretta (more on both later),[15] who directed him to historic collections of paintings that he could examine.[16] In his writing (both published and personal), Randhawa's description of his love for Pahari paintings rings of a man possessed. He acknowledges that they do not provoke the same response in everyone — but when the bug bites, the fever never goes away. It became a lifelong passion.[17]

His correspondent, William 'Bill' George Archer (1907-1979) was a Cambridge-educated fellow member of the Indian Civil Service, who served in Bihar and what later became West Bengal and Jharkhand. Inclined to poetry and literature, Archer opted for the Indian Civil Service in part by accident (he lost marks in the examination for bad handwriting), and by choice, because he 'wanted the stimulus of a new culture'.[18] In keeping with his socialist principles and Labour credentials, he saw himself as a midwife, helping to deliver Indian independence.[19]

Archer — later, with his wife Mildred (also known as Tim, an art historian in her own right) — soaked it in. His first publications were on tribal sculpture and poetry. Their joint exposure to many forms of Indian art and their varied friendships with

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[14] He does this in correspondence, and several publications, like M. S. Randhawa, *Indian Paintings: Exploration, Research and Publications* (Chandigarh: Government Museum and Art Gallery, 1986), and M. S. Randhawa, *Aap Beeti*.

[15] Sobha Singh was a Sikh painter who gained fame for visualising and painting portraits of the Sikh Gurus. After partition, he settled in the then remote village of Andretta, which is now a popular tourist spot, purchasing a house there from the proceeds of painting sales from an exhibition that Randhawa organised. M. S. Randhawa, *Aap Beeti* p. 201. He was awarded the Padma Shri in 1983. He is listed as being from Haryana in the official list. 'List of Recipients of the Bharat Ratna', Ministry of Home Affairs Website [http://www.mha.nic.in/sites/upload_files/mha/files/YearWiseListOfRecipientsBharatRatnaPadmaAwards-1954-2014.pdf, accessed 12 January, 2017].

[16] M. S. Randhawa, 'A Review of Studies in Pahari Painting' in *Cultural Contours of India: Dr Satya Prakash Felicitation Volume* ed. by V. S. Srivastava (New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1981), pp. 295-306.

[17] M. S. Randhawa, *Travels in the Western Himalayas in Search of Paintings* (New Delhi: Thomson Press, 1974).

[18] W. G. Archer and Mildred Archer, *India Served and Observed* (London: B. A. C. S. A), p. 5.

[19] *Ibid.*

collectors during Bill Archer's postings formed the bedrock of their later scholarly careers. After sixteen years in India, Archer became the Keeper of the Indian Section at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London in May 1949. It was a fortuitous appointment, for he had been casting around for suitable work that would help him retain the India connection whilst paying the bills. Once in post, he concluded that he had to specialise in one or another aspect of Indian art, given the size of the field; yet *so much* remained to be accomplished.

Already familiar with Kalighat, Madhubani and other 'folk' styles of painting, Archer had been introduced to paintings from the Punjab Hills by P. C. Manuk and his companion Ms G. M. Coles in Patna. They later bequeathed several of their paintings to the Victoria & Albert Museum. Augmented by the William Rothstein Collection, whose acquisition in 1950 Archer oversaw, there turned out to be a respectable body of work for him to grapple with, coinciding with his background and interests. The result of his labours was a slim volume of essays titled *Indian Painting in the Punjab Hills*,[20] which was what had caught Randhawa's attention.[21] Randhawa's letter delighted Archer, for it confirmed his theories even though he had constructed them at several removes — far away from the paintings' places of production and consumption, and with no opportunities to study and compare the small Victoria & Albert Museum collection he was working on with the wider oeuvre. Archer's warm response[22] led to an intense friendship that lasted the rest of their lives, attested to by their letters in the British Library and the Chandigarh Museum's Library.[23]

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[20] W. G. Archer, *Indian Painting in the Punjab Hills* (Victoria & Albert Museum Monographs (3), London: H. M. S. O, 1952).
[21] W. G. and Mildred Archer, *India Served and Observed*, pp. 130-131.
[22] Summarised in M. S. Randhawa, 'A Review of Studies in Pahari Painting', but the letter can also be found in the Archer Papers, Mss Eur F236/301.
[23] The bulk of the letters are in the Archer Papers, Mss Eur F236/302-305. It is almost a duplicate of the Chandigarh Museum's set.

Figs 5.2 & 5.3: (above) M. S. Randhawa; (below) W. G. and Mildred Archer early in their careers.[24]

[24] Images: (above) *Roopa Lekha* 38:1&2 (1969), p. 17, Courtesy the AIFACS Library. (below), W. G. and Mildred Archer, *India Served and Observed*, p. 108.

Archer had been wanting to return to India for some time. He was keen to reconnect with the art world in his new capacity at the Victoria & Albert Museum. He spent four months from January to April 1954 crisscrossing the country at a blistering pace. He covered every significant collection in private hands, public institutions or on a monument, that he could get to between Bombay, Baroda, Bikaner, Delhi, Calcutta, and Hyderabad. He had the support of the Government of India through Humayun Kabir (then Secretary in the Ministry of Education headed by Maulana Azad; Kabir was a friend since Cambridge), who persuaded the Finance Ministry that 'it was clearly quite necessary that the Keeper of the Indian Section in London should know the main sites in the country.'[25]

A trip to the Kangra Valley in February-March with Randhawa was the highlight — as such trips remained thereafter — for both professional and personal reasons. The two hit it off as soon as they met, Archer describing Randhawa as a mesmerising vision, 'lithe, vigorous, smooth-cheeked, with a pale brown skin, a Sikh but without beard or turban…almost immediately he infected the company with his genial gusto.'[26] He compared his 'soul force' favourably with Gandhi's (whom he had met once in Bihar), and thought everyone around them (they were at a gathering) 'sensed his greatness'. He commented on his 'strong action…as Chief Commissioner of Delhi in 1947 [he was actually Deputy Commissioner]…restoring order and stopping massacres' and his 'endless compassion for the weak and suffering.'[27]

As one of the men on the ground responsible for dealing with the enormous refugee influx into the city during partition, Randhawa's role in this episode is contested. In her study of the refugees and boundaries produced by partition and the Delhi riots, Vazira Zamindar suggests that his official correspondence reveals an underlying communal bias that affected his sense of fairness, for instance in allotting housing, or his perception of where the 'problems' lay.[28] Prime Minister Nehru's concerns (in part arising from his frustration at the chaotic and conflicting reports from the ground in

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[25] Diary entry, 16 January 1954, Archer Papers, Mss Eur F236/116.
[26] Diary entry, 18 January 1956, *Ibid.*
[27] *Ibid.*
[28] Vazira Zamindar, *The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia: Refugees, Boundaries, Histories* (New York; Chichester: Columbia University Press, 2010).

Delhi), lends weight to this view. Nehru wrote to Deputy Prime Minister Sardar Vallabhai Patel in September and October 1947, worried that Randhawa's sympathies lay in 'certain directions', impinging on his ability to do his job. Patel defended Randhawa, pointing to the latter's track record, suggesting that a desire to 'settle scores' was a likely reason for any complaints.[29]

This was also Randhawa's view. He was candid about such incidents in his autobiography; he did not see himself as communally biased.[30] When pulled up on complaints of his 'partiality' to Punjabi refugees, he owned up to it, writing, 'I help these Punjabis because they have been displaced, and not because they are Punjabis. It is every Indian's duty to help refugees.' He went on to reflect on Indians' difficulty in rising 'above the narrow bounds of state, religion and caste, and help[ing] the other'.[31] And yet, it is a fact that Punjabi refugees to India were, by default, Sikh, and Hindu. The matter remains controversial, and not immaterial to his ways of collecting. In due course, the Government of India transferred Randhawa to East Punjab, his home province (the family village was in Hoshiarpur). There, until 1953, he spent most of his time working on rural refugee rehabilitation and settlement, of which his classic official account, *Out of the Ashes* was published in 1954.[32]

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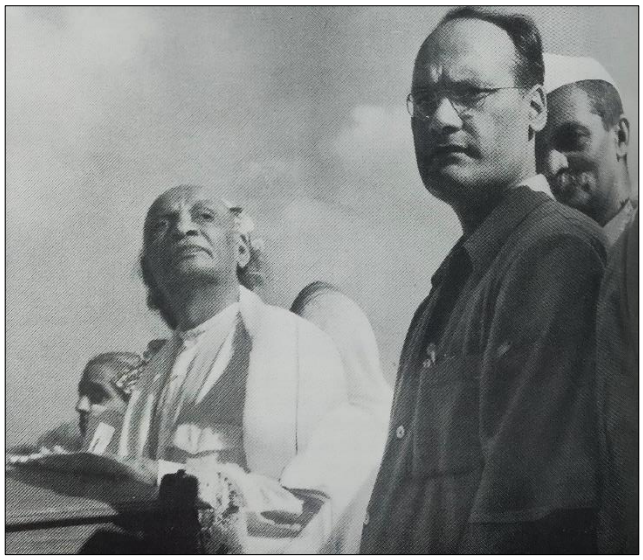
[29] Durga Das (ed.), *Sardar Patel's Correspondence Vol IV*, pp. 293-303. Also see Taylor Sherman, *State Violence and Punishment in India* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), p. 148. There are scores of letters of support from both Muslim and non-Muslim communities protesting Randhawa's transfer from Delhi in 1948. To the best of my knowledge, this material is yet to be analysed and interpreted. File 28/16/48 Appt. (SP), Ministry of Home Affairs, National Archives of India.
[30] M. S. Randhawa, *Aap Beeti*, pp. 187-188. He recounts meeting Gandhi, who asked him about his damaged reputation for fairness.
[31] *Ibid*., p. 192.
[32] M. S. Randhawa, *Out of the Ashes: An Account of the Rehabilitation of Refugees from West Pakistan in Rural Areas of East Punjab* (Punjab: Public Relations Department, 1954). Also see Ian Talbot, 'Punjabi refugees' Rehabilitation and the Indian State: Discourses, Denials and Dissonances' in *From Subjects to Citizens: Society and the Everyday State in India and Pakistan, 1947-1970* ed. by Taylor Sherman, William Gould, Sarah Ansari (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 119-142, for a critical assessment of the differences between official and refugee accounts of rehabilitation, suggesting that both should not be taken at face value.



Figs 5.4 & 5.5: (above) M. S. Randhawa with Sardar Vallabhai Patel and Dr Rajendra Prasad on the ramparts of the Red Fort on 15 August 1947; (below) Randhawa receiving his D. Sc. in 1956 from Dewan Anand Kumar, Vice Chancellor of Punjab University.[33]

[33] Images: *Roopa Lekha* 38:1&2 (1969), pp. 19-20. Courtesy the AIFACS Library.

Since then, the detailed scholarship on refugees, resettlement and evacuee property has established alternate ways of recounting and interpreting the story of rehabilitation: the fissures between policy and implementation; the corruption and networks of patronage that intervened; the tensions between refugees and 'original' inhabitants; the infrastructure and resources that governments *did* pour into resettlement (often erased in refugee memories and accounts); and its impact on how citizens and the state mutually shaped their rights and responsibilities.[34]

But besides detailing the process of refugee resettlement and rehabilitation, the volume reveals Randhawa's biases towards Sikhs and Hindus and against Muslims. In his autobiography, for example, he remarked that farmers in general, but the Sikh Jat community in particular were heroes after Independence.[35] Randhawa attributed their success — compared to neighbouring Muslim villages — to the 'discipline' and 'efficiency' brought to the life of the Sikh farmer due to his faith. Small matters such as their habits (an 'early morning bath') and clothing ('the adoption of *kaccha*', a kind of undergarment) lent them an advantage over their 'sluggish' neighbours who dressed otherwise, he declared. [36] As Joya Chatterji has noted, the valorisation of the Punjabi refugee was prevalent in bureaucratic discourse and practice (to the detriment of the Bengali refugee, in the main), repeating established colonial stereotypes of their 'martial' nature.[37]

Randhawa did offer criticism of every group of migrants he described (including the Sikh Jats) but essentialising colonial ways of seeing are embedded in his account. His

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[34] Joya Chatterji, 'South Asian Histories of Citizenship, 1946-1970', *The Historical Journal,* 55:4 (2012), pp. 1049-1071; Pallavi Raghavan, 'The Finality of Partition: Bilateral Relations Between India and Pakistan, 1947-1957', PhD thesis, University of Cambridge (2012), recently published as Pallavi Raghavan, *Animosity at Bay: An Alternative History of the India–Pakistan Relationship, 1947-1952* (London: Hurst & Co., 2020); Garima Dhabhai, 'The *Purusharthi* Refugee: Sindhi Migrants in Jaipur's Walled City', *Economic & Political Weekly*, 53:4 (2018), pp. 66-72; Zamindar, *The Long Partition;* Taylor Sherman, William Gould, Sarah Ansari (eds.), *From Subjects to Citizens*.
[35] M. S. Randhawa, *Aap Beeti*, p. 408.
[36] Randhawa, *Out of the Ashes*, pp. 42-44.
[37] Joya Chatterji, 'Rights or Charity? The Debate over Relief and Rehabilitation in West Bengal 1947-1950' in *Partition's Legacies* (Ranikhet: Permanent Black/ Ashoka University, 2019), pp. 196-198.

sources for community descriptions included Lepel Griffin[38] and civil servants like Malcolm Darling. And of course, Randhawa was a civil servant himself, trained to use those very frameworks and tropes, which saw natural affinities between Hindus and Sikhs, rather than with Muslims.[39] Punjab was also 'exceptional'. The colonial state celebrated it for being the 'garrison' of the Raj; yet the very 'warlike' nature of the local population was a source of perennial anxiety and insecurity. The range of strategies the state developed to neutralise these perceived threats had entrenched the soldier-son-of-the-soil stereotype.[40]

Although the civil service in 1947 was not what it had been even in 1900, it still groomed men usually considered godlike by their subordinates and dependents due to their sweeping power and authority: 'doers' rather than talkers. It is natural that many of them came to believe in the myth of the civil servant's role as much as they lived the reality, and Randhawa and Archer were no exception.[41] It helps to explain their instant connect: leaving the ICS did not mean that it ever left you.[42]

Randhawa and Archer appear to have had shared biases. For his part, in his memoirs, Archer quoted the eighteenth-century traveller (and part-time resident) Mrs Eliza Fay's interest in "the mild countenances and gentle manners of the Hindoos" to explain his own affinity for India. While Mrs Fay might well have used 'Hindoo' as a blanket term for all the locals she encountered, Archer specified the 'tribal Uraons and

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[38] Presumably, *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab* which was the revised edition of *The Panjab Chiefs* originally published in 1865 (Lahore: T. C. McCarthy). It was revised and corrected up to July 1939 by G L. Chopra under orders of the Punjab Government according to the Cambridge University Library catalogue entry. Although cited on p. 42 of *Out of the Ashes*, it is not listed in Randhawa's Selected Bibliography.

[39] M. S. Randhawa, *Aap Beeti,* p. 182 and Chapter 25 *passim.*

[40] Mark Condos, *The Insecurity State: Punjab and the Making of Colonial Power in British India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), especially Chapter II. Mridula Mukherjee critiques the notion that Punjab's agricultural exceptionalism was behind the success of the Green Revolution. Although the details of her argument are not relevant to this thesis, her point of departure itself tells us how embedded the position remains. *Colonializing Agriculture: the Myth of Punjab Exceptionalism* (New Delhi; Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2005).

[41] Archer's approval of Indira Gandhi's imposition of Emergency regulations (even though he thought it regrettable) exemplifies the ICS penchant for order. See Archer Papers, Mss Eur F236/269.

[42] Clive Dewey, *Anglo-Indian Attitudes: The Mind of the Indian Civil Service* (London: Hambledon, 1993). Randhawa describes the 'brotherhood' that developed amongst officers. M. S. Randhawa, *Aap Beeti*, p. 122.

Santals or Bihari Brahmins, Rajputs, Kayasths and Ahirs,' with whom he 'had acquired a sense of Indian identity.'[43] On another occasion, he disapprovingly cited the 'pressures of Muslim rule' as the reason why an 'early unrepressed [Hindu] society'[44] in which women were far more visible, had to impose restraints on itself.

A diary entry from his 1954 trip is more candid. He had delivered a lecture on Pahari painting at the University in Hyderabad, where he had received a 'sharp corrective' from Dr Hussain, Head of the History Department, who said Archer had 'omitted to make clear that all Indian miniature painting was Mughal' and that the Kangra or Pahari painting Archer had waxed eloquent about was (although interesting) a branch of, and thus 'really' Mughal.[45] Hussain was conflating several issues in his criticism. At one level, he was articulating the ambivalence of being Muslim in India, especially in Hyderabad where, as Taylor Sherman has shown, the violent 'police action' which 'integrated' the former princely state in 1948 spawned a fresh cycle of 'othering' and negotiating belonging for Muslims in India.[46]

It extended to 'Muslim' artistic and architectural heritage: made for or by Muslims who some saw as external to India because the roots of their faith lay outside its bounds, should one embrace it as Indian?[47] If it *was* Indian, Hussain for his part could not bear to see imperial 'Islamic' Mughal art that he identified with, superseded in the canon, especially not by the provincial Hindu art that was Pahari painting. Hussain's responses are a striking example of the role of art in staking claim to, and articulating nationhood. The strength of his criticism also hints at a shift in emphasis in the Indian art historical canon, in which Mughal art was no longer the high watermark, and Pahari painting would soon be on the ascendant. In response, Archer recorded:

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[43] Mrs Eliza Fay cited in W. G. and Mildred Archer, *India Served and Observed,* p. 122, along with Archer's own comments. Mrs Fay's letters are available online [https://archive.org/details/originalletters00forsgoog/page/n8, accessed 27 September 2019].
[44] W. G. and Mildred Archer, *India Served and Observed,* p. 37.
[45] Diary entry, 17 March 1954, Archer Papers, Mss Eur F236/118.
[46] Taylor Sherman, *Muslim Belonging in Secular India: Negotiating Citizenship in Postcolonial Hyderabad* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).
[47] See the next chapter for a greater discussion, and also Devika Singh, 'Approaching the Mughal Past in Indian Art Criticism: The Case of MARG (1946-1963)', *Modern Asian Studies*, 47:1 (2013), pp. 167-203.

> 'Reflecting on last night's lecture, I found myself quite absurdly angry with Hussain. I was beginning to like Muhammedans, for M. Quaja Ahmad has been so solicitous and kindly that my heart began to warm toward his community. But Hussain was so stupidly bombastic about the Mughals, so insensitive to Kangra art, so contemptuous, by implication, of the Hindus that I found myself shouting, "Death to these barbarous puritans."'[48]

Here then was the riposte to the idea that Mughal *was* Indian, buttressed by decades — if not centuries — of colonial thinking and discourse that saw Hindus and Muslims as separate nations, casting Muslims as 'foreigners'. Although using the Mughal presence (and their predecessors') to justify their own position in the subcontinent as the latest in a long line of invaders who 'revitalised' a civilisation in irreversible decline, Christian Europe's suspicions of Muslims was deep-rooted. Furthermore, for Archer Muslims proved their perfidy by their demand for Pakistan and the partition of his beloved "Hindoo" India. For, the very next sentences record that:

> 'During the last five years I have changed my ideas about the Mughals quite a lot but as much as I admire Akbar, and loathe Aurangzeb, I shall never feel about them as I do about Govardhan Chand, or Balwant Singh'[49]

There is always a risk of anachronism. Both Randhawa and Archer had abiding, warm feelings for friends of the Muslim faith, both before and after this period. Indeed, their shared relationship with Fakir Syed Aijazuddin of the Fakir family of Lahore[50] was that of mentors in the study of Pahari painting, verging on father-figures.[51] The latter recalls no sectarian bent in either one.[52] But we forget that partition happened to those

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[48] Diary entry, 18 March 1954, Archer Papers, Mss Eur F236/118.
[49] *Ibid.* Raja Govardhan Chand of Guler and Raja Balwant Singh of Jammu were patrons of Pahari painting. In this thesis, see Chapter IV for how the rulers of the Western Himalayas were constructed as the epitome of Hindu kingship. The idea retains currency today and Archer and Randhawa's writing contributed to supporting this view, for which see Chapter VI.
[50] The family traces its ancestry to the three Fakir brothers Azizuddin, Imamuddin and Nuruddin (the last being Aijazuddin's ancestor) who served as ministers in Maharaja Ranjit Singh's court. F. S. Aijazuddin, *The Resourceful Fakirs: Three Muslim Brothers at the Sikh Court of Lahore* (New Delhi: Three Rivers Publishers, 2014).
[51] F. S. Aijazuddin, *The Fickle 70s*: *Memoirs, 1972-1979* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 2016), pp. 53-57. Aijazuddin and Archer's affectionate correspondence can be found in the Archer Papers, Mss Eur F236/232-235.
[52] F. S. Aijazuddin, personal communication, March 2018.

who were *not* forced to flee too[53] (though Randhawa was not unaffected, having lost land in West Punjab[54]). How did people like Randhawa and Archer process it as bystanders or government officials, and how fleeting or lasting was its impact?

In his study of anxiety (in part, an attempt to rehabilitate it as a productive emotion) Charlie Kurth suggests that one way in which we respond to situations that cause anxiety is by collecting information.[55] Katherine Butler Schofield has borrowed this idea to help explain the increased production of *tazkirah* (authoritative compilations, or directories of a sort) of musicians and poets following Nadir Shah's infamous sack of Delhi in 1739. Accompanied by a civilian massacre of horrific proportions, it resulted in the destruction or disintegration of many musical lineages. For the survivors, later dispersed across North India and the Deccan, she argues that the painstaking process of collecting and recording information in *tazkirah* was not only an attempt to remember and reconstruct their musical heritage — and thus identity — but that the collecting itself was a coping mechanism for anxiety;[56] a way to re-order a disordered world. It points to the possibility that Archer and Randhawa's drive to collect was prompted by something deep-seated and elemental,[57] in addition to the role of politics, and the compulsions of aesthetic connoisseurship.

In his autobiography, Randhawa recalled his relationships with and opinions of the many individuals he had met over his life, including eminent Muslims such as Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad, whom he recalled as 'the only man walking on the path of truth' in

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53 Anjali Bhardwaj Datta, 'Rebuilding Lives and Redefining Spaces: Women in Post-colonial Delhi, 1945-1980', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cambridge (2015).
54 Randhawa and his brothers lost some land in Montgomery, West Punjab, which they tried to exchange with a migrating Muslim, Mr. Badrul Islam, through the Custodian of Evacuee Property. Having sought permission from superiors at every stage, Randhawa was exonerated of any wrongdoing; but the East Punjab Director General of Rural Rehabilitation indicated that such arrangements would not be honoured. So, Randhawa cancelled the transaction and applied for compensation in East Punjab. Ministry of Home Affairs, Establishments Section, File 25/39/49-Ests, National Archives of India.
55 Charlie Kurth, *The Anxious Mind* (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2018).
56 Katherine Butler Schofield, 'Guardian of the Flame: Miyan Himmat Khan and the Last of the Mughal Emperors', lecture delivered at the British Library, London, 3 December 2018.
57 The motives behind collecting can be hard to pin down, but scholars across a range of disciplines have tried. For an overview of the debates, and an argument that favours humans' deep-seated need for order (and thus emotional security) being a prime motivation, see G. Thomas Tanselle, 'A Rationale of Collecting', *Raritan: A Quarterly Review,* 19:1, 1999, pp. 23-50.

the midst of religious ferment. Randhawa was approving, because Azad was a Congress leader opposed to partition and the creation of Pakistan. Another was 'the Vice Chancellor of Jamia Milia Islamia, Dr. Zakir Hussain…the best leader among the Muslims' and whom Randhawa also 'deeply respected'.[58] He mentions others who were dear friends.[59] But he recalls other experiences too. To cite one example, on his return from two years of Civil Service training in London, he travelled by train to his first posting in the company of a Hindu, and a Muslim:

> 'I was re-growing my beard and hair, and when I removed my turban, I looked like a maulvi. The Muslim met me very warmly, greeted me with *Assalamu-alaikum*, and started bad-mouthing Hindus. I tied my turban in the morning, and he became embarrassed because of his faux pas.
>
> I was very passionate about the independence of the nation, and when I told the Hindu traveller about my ideas, that our country should be free of the English, he was greatly affected. He happily called for tea and food, and when I started paying the waiter for the bill, he stopped me and said, "You are my guest today." This was the warmth and love of the nation which could not be found in Europe.'[60]

'The Muslim' is cast as the 'bad-mouthing' 'type' in contrast to the 'warmth and love' between Randhawa (the Sikh) and 'the Hindu', who constitute 'the nation'. Years later, while taking over as Deputy Commissioner of Delhi, he 'controlled' his anger at news of continuous stabbings organised by the Muslim League 'in a planned manner', due to which 'the Hindus of Delhi were especially fearful'.[61] While he held all parties responsible for unleashing violence, the Muslim League and Muslims in general featured more frequently as attackers, or the cause of the problem: 'We observed that as more Muslims left the mohallas, it became more peaceful'.[62]

Randhawa's autobiography is a sometimes disjointed, contradictory, rambling account of his life, with contributions from his sister Harbans Kaur on their childhood, and spouse Iqbal Kaur on their life as farmers, and on their travels (with Archer and others)

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[58] M. S. Randhawa, *Aap Beeti*, p. 181.
[59] *Ibid.*, pp. 198-199.
[60] *Ibid.,* pp. 110-111.
[61] *Ibid.,* p. 169.
[62] *Ibid.,* p. 179.

in search of 'Kangra painting'. He wrote (or compiled and edited) it in two spurts, from 1972-1976, and 1982-1985, many years after the events occurred. The first batch (the childhood years) was serialised for newspaper publication.[63] He wrote to be read, and so his positive comments about select individuals, the instances he recounts of his prompt action saving Muslim lives, or his dispassionate 'analysis' of riot situations,[64] serve to burnish his non-partisan credentials; but they do not veil his biases. Reading him in conjunction with Archer's comment above, and recalling their Indian Civil Service training and outlook,[65] there is a sense that the exceptional Muslims proved the rule that the community in general was 'troublesome'.

He was unabashed about his passion for and commitment to Punjab, observing that others 'did not suffer because of partition',[66] and confessing that his 'heart would fill with hatred' for those 'sycophants' who, according to him, were neither sympathetic, knowledgeable, nor honest in their assessments of the refugee situation[67] and thus failed to realise that 'the welfare of Punjab and the entire country hinged on' rehabilitating them successfully.[68] But it was more than just a pragmatic approach to the facts of partition; rather, it was an emotional rooting that placed Punjab at the heart of India:

> 'I discovered that Punjabi is also the language of Kangra, Bilaspur, Suket, Mandi, Jammu and Chamba through my research and study of the songs of Kangra. This result emerged after extended discovery and this is important especially today, when blinded by emotion, people do not hesitate to lie. This research proved that Punjabi is the common language of Mother India and it is not the personal property of any community or religion'[69]

I suggest that Randhawa's devotion to Punjab, and his anti-Muslim biases were the two key factors that drove his passion for collecting on the one hand, whilst shaping the

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[63] *Ibid.*, pp. 9-14.
[64] *Ibid.*, pp. 181, 193.
[65] Here I also include upbringing. Randhawa's sister (who drafted the chapters on their family and childhood in *Aap Beeti*) recalls an incident when their parents banned them from visiting a local Muslim family. *Ibid.*, p. 24.
[66] *Ibid.,* p. 184. This is a blatant misrepresentation, as Joya Chatterji ('Rights or Charity?') and others have shown.
[67] *Ibid.,* p. 185.
[68] *Ibid.,* p. 201.
[69] *Ibid.,* p. 13.

art historical narrative he developed, on the other. As I will demonstrate in the following sections, he and Archer between them strove to civilise the already-valorised Punjabi peasant through art, by ensuring that the 'biggest collection of Kangra painting remained in Punjab so that Punjabis can seek inspiration…and greatly savour' it.[70] This vision glosses over the question of whether the art was 'Punjabi' at all, given that it was acquired from the Kangra Valley, a discrete geographic and cultural region that was merged with Himachal Pradesh in 1966. The next chapter on Archer and Randhawa's aesthetic discourse will demonstrate why it *had* to be Pahari painting that redeemed Punjab.

Placing Pahari Painting in the Indian Art Historical Canon

In 1957, Randhawa began to plan to secure Archer's services to advise the Punjab Government about its Museum, which it had decided to house at the Moti Bagh Palace in Patiala (thought to be final at the time).[71] At the same time, there was 'also a proposal for building a new Museum at Chandigarh…Corbusier [was] preparing the plans. The Museum at Patiala contains a number of paintings, weapons…relating to the past rulers of the Sikh states of the Punjab' but it is telling that Randhawa thought 'the Pahari miniatures would go in the Chandigarh museum.'[72] It indicates that he thought of the Chandigarh Museum as a better home for Pahari paintings; and ranked Pahari painting above the (jumbled) contents of the Moti Bagh.

The Chandigarh Museum was going to take a year or so to design and begin construction, but in the meanwhile, Randhawa wanted Archer's advice on Moti Bagh's suitability as a museum, and to catalogue the Pahari paintings earmarked for the Chandigarh Museum.[73] Archer was happy to oblige, as he also wanted 'to gather material for a book on Painting under the Sikhs which is a project I have often thought of and

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[70] *Ibid.,* p. 281
[71] See previous chapter for an account of the ups and downs in the process of securing a home for the collections.
[72] M. S. Randhawa to W. G. Archer, 16 March 1957, Archer Papers, Mss Eur F236/301.
[73] *Ibid.*

which the Punjab Government might very much like.'[74] It turned out they did — with some persuasion from Randhawa — and so Archer was able to return in 1960, this time with financial help from the Government of Punjab. He felt that his visit would be timely,

> 'in view of the very wide interest attaching to Punjabi culture, the development of the Chandigarh Museum, the importance of Sikh art and the world-wide interest in Kangra Valley painting. It might also enable us to collect fresh materials for books and articles and thus spread knowledge and appreciation of Punjabi art.'[75]

Archer's emphasis on Punjab's international cultural image is thought-provoking. He made these comments a mere decade after partition, when Punjab had been in the international news for all the wrong reasons. Famous photographers like Margaret Bourke-White had produced iconic images capturing the orgy of violence at partition, and the distress and devastation that Punjabis wrought upon one another. The impression they left was of lawless and thus uncivilised wildness.[76] The resilience and doughtiness of the Punjabi peasant was one possible positive spin that Government could and did use,[77] but there were few others. Now the tide was turning, according to Archer. Pahari painting and the Chandigarh project between them seemed to have shown the world that Punjab 'had' art and would soon have 'modern' architecture; therefore, its largely rural population 'had' culture and civilisation, and 'progress'. It could not be clearer that the heritage 'value' assigned to Pahari paintings, the pursuit of them, and their display in a 'modern' museum was because of their 'cultural purchase, or symbolic power'[78] to rehabilitate Punjab's shattered image.

Their 'considered opinion' conveyed to the Chief Minister Pratap Singh Kairon and Amarnath Vidyalankar (Minister for Education) 'was that the Picture Gallery should

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[74] W. G. Archer to M. S. Randhawa, 9 July 1958, *Ibid.*
[75] W. G. Archer to M. S. Randhawa, 10 September 1959, *Ibid.*
[76] Leaving aside the politics and agendas behind such images, which have always been factors to consider when analysing them. For visual material as a source for historians, see Annamaria Motrescu-Mayes and Marcus Banks (eds.), *Visual Histories of South Asia* (Delhi: Primus Books, 2018).
[77] Joya Chatterji, 'Rights or Charity?'.
[78] Bella Dicks, 'Heritage as a Social Practice' in *Heritage at the Interface: Interpretation and Identity* ed. by Glenn Hooper (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2018), p.11.

be isolated from the museum and located at Chandigarh,' based on the 'large collection of the finest miniature paintings from various parts of the country' that Randhawa had collected for the Punjab Government.[79] They felt it was

> 'very necessary that this collection of paintings should be seen by the people of Punjab and this could only be possible if they are located in Chandigarh instead of being buried in a corner of Moti Bagh Palace...This Picture Gallery will place Punjab on the cultural map of India.'[80]

If the Punjab Government could not afford to build a Picture Gallery, Randhawa had a backup plan: Panjab University, which would ensure the paintings were accessible to the public and retained at Chandigarh.

It is curious that Archer and Randhawa distinguished between a Museum and Art Gallery, to the disadvantage of the former. They seem to suggest that while a Museum was appropriate for a mishmash of objects, pictures deserved special, and indeed better, treatment. Although it is tempting to read this as supporting the view that museums were home to objects from the 'dead' past, I think it better reflects the changing definition of what counted as art, and what qualified as the finest of it.

This is well charted terrain: Tapati Guha-Thakurta has highlighted the conscious curatorial counterpoint to the colonial narrative that emerged in the middle years of the twentieth century.[81] It prioritised sculpture as the star attraction, contradicting colonial and European scholarship that dismissed it as barbaric or demoting it from art to antiquity. In contrast, paintings, textiles, and decorative arts were lumped together. Although well-represented, painting in particular ranked lower than sculpture during the middle of the century. It is almost certain that this was because most of the surviving material was less ancient, thus less 'authentically' Indian; in other words more prone to outside, invasive influences.[82] In keeping with earlier scholarship,[83] Guha-Thakurta has

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[79] Copy of letter from M. S. Randhawa to Pratap Singh Kairon, Chief Minister of Punjab, 23 April 1960, Archer Papers, Mss Eur F236/301.
[80] *Ibid.* 'Various parts of the country' makes it appear more wide-ranging than it was in reality.
[81] Tapati Guha-Thakurta, *Monuments, Objects, Histories: Institutions of Art in Colonial and Postcolonial India* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2007). Also discussed in Chapter I of this thesis.
[82] Kavita Singh, 'Museums', p. 348.
[83] Partha Mitter, *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India, 1850-1922: Occidental Orientations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

noted the prevalent discourse of art capturing the spirit of the 'people', and a nationalist discourse that conceptualised them as an ancient community, shaped by the unique spirituality of the Indian psyche.[84] The new nation had to counter longstanding colonial constructs while *also* establishing its own artistic identity, and so of the available options, it chose spiritualism[85] as the lens through which to reinterpret Indian art.

However, other factors were also at play at this time, such as the concern to address Indian art's formal and material qualities, and the broader aesthetic trends of the twentieth century which saw painting gain traction over sculpture as the finest expression of art.[86] The latter was a critical stance that Archer was immersed in; and given Randhawa's investment in Pahari paintings, he was unlikely to object. But although part of a wider shift in aesthetic trends, their passion for Pahari painting (even with disparate motivations) meant that it soon acquired elevated status. In this, their writing (which I discuss later) had as much to contribute as their collecting.

The emphasis on the picture collection echoes Archer's reorganisation of the Victoria & Albert Museum's galleries to prioritise painting in 1954.[87] Colleagues persuaded him to not rid the galleries of *all* other objects, but the exercise was preceded by a thorough spring-clean of the Museum's collections. The aim was to 'weed out' the 'mountains of rubbish' that had accumulated from an array of sources, including Queen Mary's overflowing knick-knack displays.[88] Kavita Singh has criticised Archer's decisions, and indeed, it is true that neither he nor the Museum invited Indian expertise when he made them.[89] It will always be possible to censure de-accessioning (a legal procedure for the formal removal of an object from a museum's ownership) in hindsight. As it happens, there was a committee and a process, every attempt to find alternate homes for

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84 'The Function of Art in Shaping Nationality' by Sister Nivedita cited in Tapati Guha-Thakurta, *Monuments, Objects, Histories*, p. 185. Also see Kavita Singh, 'Museums', pp. 399-400.
85 Itself a colonial trope, but harnessed by nationalists to exclude the British and assert independence in at least the religious and cultural domains.
86 Kavita Singh, 'Museums'.
87 Divia Patel, 'Cycles of Change: Re-presenting the Collection — Again' paper delivered at a conference titled 'Putting South Asia on Display', British Museum, London, 28 September 2018.
88 W. G. and Mildred Archer, *India Served and Observed*, p. 128. Also see the next chapter.
89 Kavita Singh, 'Museums', pp. 349-350.

objects, and only disintegrating objects were consigned for destruction.[90] Nevertheless, it alerts us to the continuing power of museums to define and shape what cultural heritage can and should be valued.

The 'Archer Report'[91] which resulted from Archer's 1960 trip was seminal. It did not reincarnate Moti Bagh as a museum (which it provided guidance for but did not recommend); but it established the incomparable national value of the painting collection. Archer declared it to be 'one of the greatest in India', revealing 'the Punjab's supreme contribution to Indian art…[It is] essential for the State's prestige that it should be well kept and made readily available to scholars and students.'[92] It made the case for a purpose-built and properly-staffed museum in the Capital, Chandigarh, prompting the Punjab Government to sell Moti Bagh to the National Institute of Sports, just as the Department of Museums and Archives had begun to settle in.[93]

Although it was inconvenient for the Director V. S. Suri to move (yet again), it aligned with his own desire to be based at Chandigarh. But this report's true value is that it draws together the overlapping, yet competing agendas and visions for museums in Punjab that this thesis exposes: a Department of Archives that was keen to re-establish former glory by reconnecting with Punjab's pre-colonial past; a princely agenda that sought to re-centre the Sikh and wider Punjabi imaginary on Patiala and the Punjab princely states; and the Randhawa-Archer vision which placed painting at the apogee of Indian art, of which that from the Kangra Valley and Punjab Hills was the jewel in the crown. Of critical importance is that all three projects relied on princely sources of art to varying degrees, albeit selected and interpreted in different ways. The Government of India had enshrined the role of *private* royal collections *in addition to* those that rulers had already surrendered as part of their 'integration' into the Indian Union. In particular, it had required rulers to preserve their private collections for the nation in museums, or at

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[90] W. G. and Mildred Archer, *India Served and Observed*, p. 127. The V&A Archives hold detailed records of the Boards of Survey set up for the purpose, such as File VA 170/1 Pt 2.
[91] As it is called in the Chandigarh Museum today.
[92] Page 3 of the Archer Report, paragraph 3, cited in Grace Morely's report. Archer Papers, Mss Eur F236/303.
[93] See previous chapter.

least to allow regulated access.[94] How ironic that it was the 'anachronistic' princely states (which the national government tried to liquidate at the earliest) that held the keys to modern India's legitimacy and identity!

Archer and Randhawa's travels in pursuit of paintings were often reported in the local English language press,[95] much of it portraying them as saviours and guardians of Punjab's heritage. 'The people praised me and Archer for our desire to preserve Kangra art,' Randhawa recorded later.[96] But a fracas in 1963 over Randhawa's *Kangra Valley Painting* illuminates not only *how* attempts to promote art could play out in the public domain, but *what* Randhawa thought was at stake. Written in English and published by the National Museum, the book in question had since been translated into Punjabi 'with the idea of bringing the beauty of Hindi classics within the reach and understanding of the people of Punjab.'[97] It ended up raising 'a howl'[98] in the Punjab Assembly, in connection with the translated poetry that accompanied the paintings as an interpretive aide. The poetic representations of Lord Krishna were a problem: they were too sensuous and 'indecent'.

Randhawa was indignant. In his response (intended for newspaper publication), he pointed out that entertaining such objections 'would mean that it would no longer be possible to study and present the Hindu Rajput paintings of the Kangra and Rajasthani schools which are the highest achievement of India in the realm of art.' He emphasised that he and Archer had, through their joint efforts,

> 'placed Punjab on the cultural map of the world. Otherwise there was a general impression that the people of Punjab are boorish who, apart from their interest in

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[94] Ministry of States, *White Paper on Indian States* (New Delhi: Government of India, 1950), p. 65.
[95] Files 1846, 1848, Government Museum and Art Gallery Library are dedicated to press clippings of art matters between 1959-1965 and contain several examples, as do the Tribune Archives.
[96] M. S. Randhawa, *Aap Beeti*, p. 247. It was also reported in the local language press based on the recollections of his contemporaries. Kanwarjit Kang, personal communication, May 2018.
[97] Draft of note (p. 3) enclosed with letter from M. S. Randhawa to W. G. Archer, 24 April 1963, Archer Papers, Mss Eur F236/302. It is worth noting that these poems were not actually in Hindi. They were probably in Sanskrit (Jayadeva's *Gitagovinda* in Sanskrit was the subject of *Kangra Valley Painting*) or Brajabhasha, a precursor to modern Hindi, and a favoured language for poets and writers in late mediaeval North India, regardless of their faith. See Allison Busch, *Poetry of Kings: The Classical Hindi Literature of Mughal India* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).
[98] M. S. Randhawa to W. G. Archer, 24 April 1963, Archer Papers, Mss Eur F236/302.

> food and clothing, are not interested in the higher things of life, much less in art and literature. When these paintings from Kangra were presented in book form respect for Punjab and its contribution to art grew among people in India as well as abroad.'[99]

Ignorant of Sanskrit and Hindi literature, the Punjabi public was not ready, he concluded, for this specialized verse first written for elite patrons. He pointed to other examples of translated Shringara poetry (erotic, romantic, or with the flavour of beauty) to make the point that all he himself did was translate, not invent.[100] Although encouraging a more public, and thus democratic engagement with fine art, Randhawa's language makes his elite position obvious: the culture being promoted was defined by the English-educated middle-class, as the discussion in the next chapter about publishing Pahari painting will note. And yet, these were not water-tight compartments. After all, being educated often meant being bilingual or even multi-lingual (at least, at this time), and this incident demonstrates the resonance of these issues for a wider audience.[101]

It led to widespread support for Randhawa from twenty-one leading Hindi writers,[102] but seems to have died down. Why did it arise at all? I think Randhawa's crusade for Pahari painting had come up against local politics. Declared a bilingual state in 1956 to no-one's satisfaction, Punjab continued to be restive in the 1960s because of agitations between Hindi and Punjabi speakers, often overlaid by Hindu and Sikh religious identities. Efforts to distinguish Sikhism from Hinduism and 'purify' each already had roots in Punjab; the efforts to standardise and purify languages were also long-standing, as discussed before.

Under the circumstances, it is possible to see how a Punjabi speaker might politicise translations of erotic 'Hindi' poetry about a 'Hindu' deity, more so when it was marketed as an exalted example of Punjab's heritage, and thus something all Punjabis

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[99] Draft of note (p. 2) enclosed with M. S. Randhawa to W. G. Archer, 24 April 1963, *Ibid.*
[100] M. S. Randhawa to W. G Archer, 24 April 1963, *Ibid.*
[101] On the vibrance of print culture and the heated debates that took place in periodicals, see C. Ryan Perkins, 'From the *Mehfil* to the Printed Word: Public Debate and Discourse in late Colonial India', *Indian Economic and Social History Review,* 50:1 (2013), pp. 47-76.
[102] M. S. Randhawa to W. G. Archer, 10 May 1963, Archer Papers, Mss Eur F236/302. 'Controversy Over Book: Author Not to Blame, Say 21 Men of Letters', *The Tribune,* 11 May 1968, The Tribune Archives.

ought to read. Conversely, we see why leading Hindi writers would oppose such a position. Compartmentalising language and literary culture for political gain has a long history in India, in part, the outcome of colonial policies, and later mobilised in the independence movement. Scholars of early modern, precolonial and colonial India have shown how recent and leaky such divisions are, how fluid linguistic — and broad cultural — identities were in the past.[103] Thus, it was *also* these shifting boundaries that allowed Randhawa and Archer to claim literary and artistic works for Punjab, that might otherwise have fallen beyond the pale. The claims have endured, even if they have not remained uncontested.

They may have seen themselves as recovering a lost and disconnected past; but it is possible to see in hindsight that it was a project with a political edge. Randhawa was explicit that the value of his and Archer's work lay in its rescuing Punjab's tattered image in the eyes of the world (especially given its turbulent recent history). He was unequivocal about,

> 'the importance of the culture of the Punjab as a source of inspiration to the Kangra artists, a source of which has not been adequately considered by art critics, who usually have little knowledge of the province, its people and culture'.[104]

Randhawa, as a civil servant posted there could, of course (and did[105]), claim intimate knowledge of it and he used his position to hammer his message home to domestic audiences, and through Archer, to international ones.

Adopting elite practices is an acknowledged way in which to gain social mobility. For instance, the Sikh leaders did so as they gained greater control over the Punjab,

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[103] In addition to Busch, see Francesca Orsini, *The Hindi Public Sphere, 1920-1940: Language and Literature in the Age of Nationalism* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2012). For a personalised dimension to this, see the 'Childhood' section of *Aap Beeti*. Drafted by Randhawa's sister Harbans Kaur, it covers the early twentieth century. Her description of her siblings and herself participating in 'Hindu' festivals like Diwali without any self-consciousness, and the variety of women their father married, of whom only one (their mother) appears to have been a Sikh hints at a multifaceted heritage. From the other end of the social spectrum, Maharaja Jagatjit Singh's diary testifies to a plural religious environment. Brigadier H. H. Sukhjit Singh and Cynthia Meera Frederick, *Prince Patron and Patriarch: Maharaja Jagatjit Singh of Kapurthala* (New Delhi: Roli Books, 2019).

[104] Herbert J. Stooke, *Oriental Art,* 2:2 (1956), cited in M. S. Randhawa, *Indian Paintings*, p. 37.

[105] M. S. Randhawa, *Indian Paintings*, p. 37.

aiming for Rajput status; but it is by no means exclusive to them.[106] Here, Randhawa was claiming ownership of the refined art of producing and consuming Pahari painting — previously the preserve of the Rajput courts of the hills — for the entire population of Punjab, which served to improve its 'boorish' peasant image. He did complement his public relations campaign with an educational one, exhorting his 'peasant brethren' to attend to, and soak themselves in, and recover their 'own' culture. Although encouraging of the arts and education in general, the message to his fellow Punjabis about Pahari painting is clear.

Randhawa and Archer's promotion of Pahari painting over the years must also be evaluated against their own proclivities and biases. Flagship post-independence public projects drew on elements of India's Buddhist (Ashoka) and Mughal (Akbar) past (perceived as secular) for inspiration in architecture and art.[107] Enshrining courtly painting from the hills as the glory of Indian art (which had also moved away from the early emphasis on sculpture, to painting) countered this.[108] Although Mughal art had an assured place in Indian art criticism and art history by the 1960s,[109] it was still 'tainted' by the fact of invasion or often, the 'bigotry' of (Muslim) Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb.[110] While differentiating Kangra from Mughal painting, Randhawa declared:

> 'In Mughal paintings, one can only see the Mughal Emperors or their courtiers, and in some cases, scenes of the hunt…Court paintings can never be elevated art

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[106] Historians have noted how the Rajputs as a warrior-ruler community were appropriated and used across India from Bengal to Madras as exemplars of indigenous bravery, strength, ability to rule and resistance against invasion, as a counter to colonial tropes of the emasculated native. See Lloyd I. Rudolph and Susanne H. Rudolph, *Romanticism's Child: An Intellectual History of James Tod's Influence on Indian History and Historiography* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2017). Also see A. S. Melikian-Chirvani, 'Ranjit Singh and the Image of the Past' in *The Arts of the Sikh Kingdoms* ed. by Susan Stronge (London: V&A Publications, 1999), which makes clear that the Sikh ruler sought to harness imperial symbols too, to demonstrate his right to rule. In his diary, Jagatjit Singh of Kapurthala was candid that re-establishing the family's Rajput status was an important consideration in a choice of bride, even though his biographers attribute different motives to the decision. Brigadier H. H. Sukhjit Singh and Cynthia Meera Frederick, *Prince Patron and Patriarch,* p. 147.

[107] Rebecca M. Brown, 'Reviving the Past', *Interventions*, 11:3 (2009); Devika Singh, 'Approaching the Mughal Past'. Also discussed previously in Chapter II of this thesis.

[108] See Kavita Singh, 'Museums', and the next chapter of this thesis.

[109] Devika Singh, 'Approaching the Mughal Past' and the next chapter of this thesis.

[110] For example, M. S. Randhawa, *Kangra Valley Painting* (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1954), pp. 1-17, but a sentiment repeated throughout his writings.

> because they smell of sycophancy. The artist can give birth to elevated art only when his mind is free, and there is no other aim for him to create art other than giving joy to himself. This freedom can be clearly seen in Guler paintings… Love and devotion for Lord Krishna has made Kangra painting very beautiful.'[111]

Here, then, was a superb example of 'indigenous' art inspired by Hindu revivalism, which flourished well after Mughal decline, thereby extending the life of India's past artistic accomplishments much closer to the present, lending 'a valuable prestige to the last phase of the history of Indian painting'.[112] That great contribution was 'appropriately' credited to the people of Punjab, already valorised as noble, intrepid, and deserving.[113]

Collecting Pahari Paintings for the Chandigarh Museum

Following their initial correspondence, Randhawa, excited by Archer's ideas, had initiated his own investigations in the Kangra district as part of his tours as Resettlement Commissioner. He had not only found the 'old collections' still in the valley, but had begun to collect paintings, 'not for myself but for the Punjab Government and the National Museum.'[114] All one had to do, according to Randhawa was to 'treat [the] owners nicely, give them money, promise them help, give them sympathy and they [were] only too glad to lend, give or sell their pictures to the Government.'[115] He also pointed out that his publications would give former rulers 'a good name'.[116] It sounds cynical, but Randhawa's approach was successful; owners compared him favourably with other ICS officers.[117]

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111 M. S. Randhawa, *Aap Beeti*, p. 290.
112 O. C. Gangoly's review of *Kangra Valley Painting* cited in M. S. Randhawa, *Indian Paintings,* p. 32.
113 In contrast to the characterisation of Bengali refugees. Joya Chatterji, 'Rights or Charity?'.
114 Archer recalling his conversation with Randhawa at their first meeting. Diary entry, 18 January 1954, Archer Papers, Mss Eur F236/116.
115 *Ibid.*
116 M. S. Randhawa, *Aap Beeti*, p. 265.
117 Diary entry, 18 January 1954, Archer Papers, Mss Eur F236/116.

Recording their first meeting in his diary, Archer thought he 'could not have found a more unique and or truer friend.'[118] Randhawa reciprocated with equal warmth, writing after their first viewing trip together, 'your visit to Punjab was like the coming of spring, and I will remember this visit as a landmark in my life. I can say nothing more.'[119]

Randhawa was true to his word and showed Archer all that he promised to. The following selections from their first itinerary[120] and subsequent correspondence reveal the thoroughness of the investigation — or hunt — for paintings. Randhawa was determined to rectify the sixty percent loss of collections that East Punjab had sustained as a result of the division of assets at partition.[121] Unable (or disinclined) to tap the princely collections of Indian Punjab (harnessed for a different museum and nation-building project as we have already seen), he turned instead to the Kangra Valley (then still a part of East Punjab) and the former Punjab Hills. By the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the rulers of the small principalities that constituted the valley had acquired stature as the last bastions of Hindu culture, outstripping their political or economic significance.[122] Randhawa was reaching into the past to revive a connection with the land, an impulse that was common in the aftermath of new boundaries and uprooted populations. Searching for an indigenous point of connect that predated the British, what better option than the artistic heritage of the Kangra Valley, with its established pedigree of Hindu high culture *and* a connection with the court of Ranjit Singh as the progenitor of Sikh art?[123] It was a perfect fit for the post-partition demographic composition of Punjab.

The tour itinerary began with 'a collection of Kangra paintings at Simla' which Randhawa had arranged to 'be transferred to Chandigarh' in time for their meeting.[124] On the way to Nurpur, they were to visit Capt. Sunder Singh (a descendant of Wazir Dhian Singh of Guler[125]), the murals of Damthal Ashram and at the Nurpur temple, the Raja of

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[118] *Ibid.*; M. S. Randhawa, *Aap Beeti*, p. 265.
[119] M. S. Randhawa to W. G. Archer, 29 March 1954, Archer Papers, Mss Eur F236/301.
[120] Sent the previous year (1953) while planning the trip.
[121] M. S. Randhawa, *Aap Beeti*, p.11.
[122] Previously discussed in Chapter IV of this thesis. Also see Arik Moran, *Kingship and Polity on the Himalayan Borderland* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2019).
[123] Discussed in Chapters IV and VI of this thesis.
[124] M. S. Randhawa to W. G. Archer, 4 September 1953, Archer Papers, Mss Eur F236/301.
[125] M. S. Randhawa to W. G. Archer, 27 October 1960, *Ibid.*

Guler, Mr. Man Chander Uppal at Kangra, Raja of Lambagraon at Dharamshala, Palampur and Andretta (with Mrs Nora Richards), and Nadaun. It concluded at Chandigarh, where Archer could 'see the collections of Shiva-Parvati and Durga paintings belonging to Maharaja Sansar Chand' which Randhawa had 'purchased for the proposed Art Gallery of the Punjab Government.'[126] The extent of Randhawa's network is evident from his ability to track down these collections, and the vast pool of official resources he was able to command such as government rest-houses, and his colleagues' and subordinates' assistance.[127] His writings, whether published or private correspondence, also make clear that his focus was not on private ownership, but institution-building, which allowed the works to be 'savoured' by Punjabis and the nation.

Within a month, Randhawa snaffled up three collections they had recently seen; Archer helped to value them.[128] Randhawa was also working on a book titled *Kangra Painting* for the Government of India[129] at this time, on whose manuscript he had 'accepted the advice of Elder Brother' as Archer became (he was four years older), and hoped would meet with his approval.[130]

They soon worked out a systematic approach that would enable them to reconstruct artist families and genealogies, their movement and employment at various courts, and the ebb and flow of patronage that produced the fine paintings by which they were so mesmerized. Armed with a twenty-three point questionnaire that traced genealogy, patronage and artist movement, Randhawa used the considerable human resources at his disposal through the administrative service to gather the information that, despite amendments, improvements, and Archer's caution, has remained the bedrock of art historical 'researches'[131] (as Randhawa termed it) on the subject.

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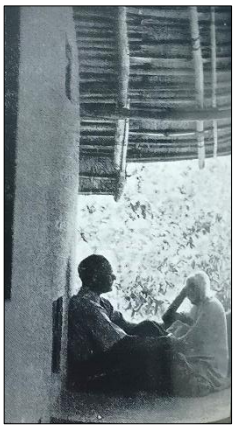
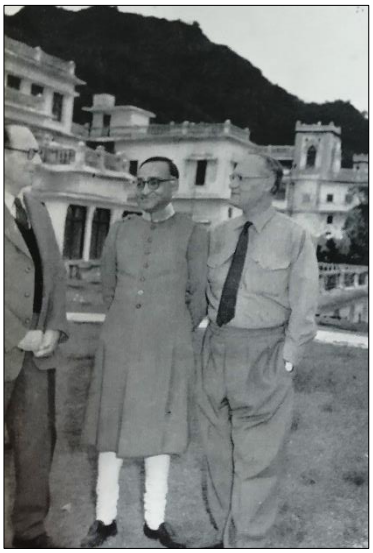
126 M. S. Randhawa to W. G. Archer, 4 September 1953, *Ibid.*
127 M. S. Randhawa, *Aap Beeti,* Section IV 'The Discovery of Kangra Paintings and Folk songs'
128 M. S. Randhawa to W. G. Archer, 17 April 1954, Archer Papers, Mss Eur F236/301.
129 M. S. Randhawa to W. G. Archer, 28 December 1953, *Ibid.*
130 M. S. Randhawa to W. G. Archer, 17 April 1954, *Ibid.*
131 M. S. Randhawa to W. G. Archer, 21 April 1954, *Ibid.*



Figs 5.6, 5.7 & 5.8: (clockwise from top) M. S. Randhawa and his wife Iqbal Kaur, Mulk Raj Anand and his colleague Dolly Sahiar, and W. G. Archer on a visit to Basohli, with Pahda Kunj Lal at the centre of the group; Randhawa with Norah Richards on the verandah of her cottage at Andretta; crowds welcome Randhawa and Archer at Saliana village in the Kangra Valley in 1966.[132]

[132] Images: *Roopa Lekha*, 38:1&2 (1969), pp. 48, 54. Courtesy the AIFACS Library.



Figs 5.9 & 5.10: (left) Archer and Randhawa with Raja Baldev Singh of Guler at Haripur, 1954 and (right) with Maharaja Manabendra Shah of Tehri Garhwal at Narendranagar.[133]

[133] Images: *Ibid.,* pp. 54, 60. Courtesy the AIFACS Library.

Randhawa's enquiries led to establishing the descendants of the celebrated painter Nainsukh. This was linked to understanding the impact of migration — a new patron and surroundings — on an artist's style, and the ripple effect on 'schools' of art, which they thought they could see in the works. What motivated this movement? Were artists migrating temporarily for work or resettling?[134]

Tracing the social history of this particular category of artisan — for artists in the hills were usually from the carpenter 'caste' — has remained the preserve of art historians. But it fits into larger enquiries about artisanal mobility and transnational migration;[135] the nature of patronage, production, consumption, and employment;[136] and the politics of patronage and protest.[137] Along with Archer and Randhawa's own work, B. N. Goswamy's path-breaking research published in 1966 identifies and traces the genealogy of several families of Pahari painters. For this, he used the records kept by priests at Haridwar and other such centres of pilgrimage, in which pilgrims from the hills had for generations recorded life events, along with details of their forbears and place of residence.[138]

We glean insights into the reasons for migration within artist communities of North India, which reveals a 'transnational' pattern of sorts, albeit in the absence of nations. For one could say that they lived and worked in 'foreign' kingdoms like at Lahore, whilst retaining family and lands in say Chamba, to which they returned with

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134 W. G. Archer to M. S. Randhawa, 27 July 1954, Archer Papers, Mss Eur F236/301.
135 C. A. Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992); Rosalind O'Hanlon, 'Scribal Migrations in Early Modern India' in *Routledge Handbook of the South Asian Diaspora* ed. by Joya Chatterji and David A. Washbrook (New York: Routledge, 2013), pp. 32-42.
136 Selected examples include Douglas E. Haynes, Abigail McGowan, Tirthankar Roy, Haruka Yanagisawa (eds.), *Towards a History of Consumption in South Asia* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2010); Douglas E. Haynes, *Small Town Capitalism in Western India: Artisans, Merchants, and the Making of the Informal Economy, 1870-1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).
137 Nandita Prasad Sahai, *Politics of Patronage and Protest*: *The State, Society and Artisans in Early Modern Rajasthan* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006). 'Artisan' is a broad category, but painters or artists seldom feature as a focus. Furthermore, none of the studies mentioned consider consumption and patronage in princely India (Sahai's focus is on politics and protest), which skews the picture.
138 B. N. Goswamy, 'The Records Kept by Priests at Centres of Pilgrimage as a Source of Social and Economic History', *Indian Economic and Social History Review,* 3:2 (1966). B. N. Goswamy also began his career in the IAS (successor of the ICS), but gave it up to pursue a career in art history. (Personal communication, May 2018).

regularity, sometimes working for more than one patron at a time. If we base our assessment on 'recurrence' of contact and engagement, and 'a regular and significant commitment of time by participants' as two criteria,[139] one could argue that at least some artists' movements fitted the pattern.

Consider too, that the Lahore court was 'cosmopolitan'[140] in both the academic understanding of the term, and the common notion of a 'multi-national', religious, and ethnic environment. Those 'particular geographies — real and imaginary — [that] were significant'[141] to them, *must* have shaped their output too, rather than their training alone. There is inadequate data to do more than speculate on this — or at best, extrapolate from Francesca Orsini. But however slippery, it does alert us to the possibility of more fluid identities to the artists of these paintings. The labels 'Pahari', 'Sikh', 'Hindu', or 'Rajput' are not inherent to the artworks, but acquired; shaped by later sensibilities, understandings of history, and political agendas.

Randhawa, by his own account, was a nationalist. He was also devoted to Punjab. These need not be mutually exclusive positions. Consider, for instance, his announcing to Archer that he had,

> 'purchased J. K. Modi's collections of 27 Bhagwat paintings for the National museum. The Punjab Govt. could not produce enough funds; otherwise I would have been most happy to purchase them for Punjab. He has sold these paintings at Rs. 1500/- each and the entire set for Rs. 40500/-'.[142]

At first glance, it suggests that Randhawa did not care which museum acquired the paintings, as long as they were public property; and this is not untrue.[143] Yet it is clear that his first choice was to acquire Pahari paintings for Punjab. I suggest that he acquired as much as he did for the Chandigarh Museum because there was a slippage between the region and the nation. The museums in Chandigarh and New Delhi did not represent the

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139 Alejandro Portes, 'Conclusion: Towards a New World — the Origins and Effects of Transnational Activities', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 22:2 (1999), p. 464.
140 Ian Woodward and Zlatko Skrbis, 'Performing Cosmopolitanism' in *Routledge Handbook of Cosmopolitanism Studies* ed. by Gerard Delanty (Abingdon; New York: Routledge, 2012), p. 136.
141 Francesca Orsini, 'The Multilingual Local in World Literature', *Comparative Literature,* 67:4 (2015), p. 346.
142 M. S. Randhawa to W. G. Archer, 3 March 1958, Archer Papers, Mss Eur F236/301.
143 W. G. Archer to M. S. Randhawa, 22 July 1958, *Ibid.*

nation equally; rather, Punjab was the nation's heart, and 'its' Pahari paintings its greatest treasure.

Chandigarh in the Regional and National Imagination

When commissioning a capital for the recently partitioned Punjab, Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, wished to be 'unfettered by tradition'. He saw Chandigarh as a way of 'looking forward' from a static state since he believed that 'a society which ceases to go ahead becomes weak'.[144] He imagined Chandigarh as a clean slate, the chance to make a fresh start in a newly-independent India, a symbol of the country's aspirations and commitment to modernity and progress, 'free from the existing encumbrances of old towns and old traditions'. He thought of it as 'the first large expression of our creative genius flowering on our newly earned freedom'[145] and felt a modern design for the city would deliver the 'hit on the head'[146] he believed the country and his fellow-citizens needed. Nehru's standpoint and our interpretation of it would be unsurprising: it is clear that he (and his generation) bought into the colonial view of India as static, needing to move on from the perceived handicap of the traditional. But the emphatic embrace of modernity through Chandigarh was also an effort to move away from a colonial legacy of which New Delhi was a daily reminder, through visible, monumental architecture. 'Modern'[147] meant being Western without depending on the West,[148] though in reality, there was a great deal of help from that hemisphere.

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144 Jawaharlal Nehru, quoted in Ravi Kalia, *Gandhinagar: Building National Identity in Postcolonial India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 2, 125.
145 Jawaharlal Nehru, quoted in Norma Evenson, *Chandigarh* (Berkeley: University of California Press,1966), p. 90.
146 Ravi Kalia, *Gandhinagar*, p. 125.
147 A loaded term whose meaning in the museum context I have already discussed in Chapter II of this thesis.
148 Ravi Kalia, *Chandigarh: The Making of an Indian City* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 144-155; Edward Shils quoted in Lawrence Vale, *Architecture, Power, and National Identity* (London; New York: Routledge, 2008, 2nd edn), p. 59.

It is revealing of the nation Nehru was imagining into being,[149] and the civic spaces and societies he envisaged as its emblems. 'The perceived need to make architecture and urban design serve politics is most salient in those countries where the form of politics is new and the forms of architecture are old'.[150] Decolonisation in the twentieth century thus resulted in several new capitals: to house new forms of government, proclaim their worthiness and status, and build national identity. But these aspirations are seldom met, for as Lawrence Vale argues, 'the design of these buildings remains closely tied to political forces that reinforce existing patterns of dominance and submission'.[151] Chandigarh's design, architectural, and functional failings might almost be better documented than its achievements — its modern Indian design language was not genuine (it was a transplant), and it failed to meet Indian requirements. For example, it was structured so that the chauffeur who drove a judge a few hundred metres to his office from his home, both of which were located in the city centre, had to walk several times that distance from the outer sectors of the city to reach his place of work. It was a cruel inversion of the democratic principles that were meant to have inspired it.[152]

Yet at its inception, Chandigarh's uniqueness lay in a contradiction, rather than its design. Although a new capital, its national stature was not explicit. If we follow Vale's argument that the 'subnational group allegiances of the sponsoring scheme' are as much a factor as the architect's personal priorities and 'the government's interest in pursuing international identity through modern architecture and planning',[153] Chandigarh signalled Government's anxieties (even if not allegiances) towards a subnational group — Punjab. In its design and siting, Chandigarh, as the new capital city, usurps New Delhi as the

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[149] Although intended here as a turn of phrase, this does expand the concept of how the nation is an 'imagined community', made famous in Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London; New York: Verso, 1991, 12th impression). Also see Jon Lang, Madhavi Desai, Miki Desai, *Architecture and Independence: The Search for Identity — India 1880 to 1980* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997), especially Chapter VII on 'Nehru's India'.

[150] Lawrence Vale, *Architecture, Power and National Identity*, pp. 9-10.

[151] *Ibid.*

[152] Norma Evenson, *Chandigarh*; Giles Tillotson, *The Tradition of Indian Architecture: Continuity, Controversy, and Change since 1850* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1989), pp. 127-135.

[153] Lawrence Vale, *Architecture, Power and National Identity,* p. 53.

locus from which to imagine and project a new India.[154] Similarly, Punjab's treasures in the Chandigarh Museum, I suggest, were placed there to be the defining cultural heritage of India.

The construction of the Museum building stuttered through the Indo-China war of 1962 only due to Randhawa's intervention. The construction company assisted, by threatening to sue the government for calling a halt after they had begun work on the foundations. The next obstacle was the Indo-Pakistan War of 1965. Randhawa persuaded the Chief Minister that 'Chandigarh without a museum would be incomplete.' It would add to the city's tourist attractions, and in keeping with international museum trends, was also a resource to integrate into 'the educational set up of the State' so that students could 'get a background of the history of Northern India in a visual form.'[155]

To get this off the ground, he supported the idea of shifting key collections such as the paintings and Gandhara sculptures into temporary exhibition space in the Government Arts College (also known as the School of Arts), under the charge of its Principal, Sushil Sarkar.[156] It was only in 1966, when Randhawa was appointed Chief Commissioner of Chandigarh, that he could make good on his intention to 'place the Museum on a sound footing.'[157] He was already a moving force behind it, but his words would be prophetic in a momentous year that would see both the Kangra Valley and its art separated from Punjab.

When it became clear that Punjab was to be trifurcated to deal with the language agitations that had endured through the late 1950s into the 1960s (to which Archer contributed in his own way by facilitating the symbolic repatriation of the Sikh Guru

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[154] Bhubaneshwar and Gandhinagar were the other post-independence planned cities. However, unlike Chandigarh, plans for a new capital for Orissa/ Odisha had been in the pipeline for more than a decade before independence, when the province was carved out of Bihar, Madras and Bengal. See Ravi Kalia, *Bhubaneshwar: From a Temple Town to a Capital City* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994). Gandhinagar was built after Chandigarh and was designed by an Indian. See Ravi Kalia, *Gandhinagar*.

[155] M. S Randhawa to P. N. Kirpal, Secretary to the Government of India, Ministry of Education, 18 April 1967, File 17/36/67-SR Ministry of Home Affairs, pp. 5-8, National Archives of India.

[156] *Ibid.* V. S. Suri put together the detailed paperwork, so it appears to have been a joint initiative. 'Shifting of State Archives and Museum to Chandigarh', p. 5, File B-13/62-65, Basta 118, Punjab State Archives, Patiala.

[157] M. S. Randhawa to W. G. Archer, 8 July 1966, Archer Papers, Mss Eur F236/302.

Gobind Singh's weapons;[158] they are now on display at Gurudwara Anandpur Sahib), Archer voiced their anxious, shared concerns. As the Government of India debated the new boundaries, he worried that it 'would be tragic if after building up such a marvellously integrated collection, you saw it broken up into three parts — as I suppose if there were to be a division, Himachal Pradesh would claim a share too.'[159]

As the debate over the Museum's future dragged into 1967, Randhawa wrote a crackling letter in April to the Education Ministry (circulated to the Home Ministry), in which he explained the history of the collections and the museum, including the aborted attempt to establish one at the Moti Bagh Palace Patiala — a 'disastrous' idea in his view, which he had intervened to correct by persuading Government to appoint Archer to submit an 'unbiased' report that called for a new, dedicated building.[160]

Becoming Chief Commissioner had provided him the 'opportunity to give a push to the construction work which had been lingering for the last four years' and the building had soon become ready for occupation. It was at this juncture that he made the strategic decision to call in Grace Morley. At this time, she was Advisor on Museums to the Education Ministry, having completed her stint as Director of the National Museum New Delhi (from 1960-1966). He asked her 'to examine the building and to make her suggestions regarding display and also for appointment of staff.' Randhawa restated the highlights of her report, which concluded that the building was better than any of Corbusier's previous international museums, in part, he said,

> 'due to the fact that I did not allow M. Corbusier to have it in his own way, and told him clearly that I did not like his Museum in Ahmedabad. He accepted this criticism and conceded many modifications which we thought were necessary.'[161]

Not only was Randhawa an administrator facilitating the museum project, but an active participant who had built the collection since 1952, the year in which he had started his 'research in Kangra Paintings'. His 'vigorous drive' to collect meant the

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158 See Archer Papers, Mss Eur F236/214-216, Archer Papers, Mss Eur F236/302. Also see M. S. Randhawa, *Indian Paintings*, pp. 251-259.
159 W. G. Archer to M. S. Randhawa, 16 July 1966, Archer Papers, Mss Eur F236/302.
160 M. S Randhawa to P. N. Kirpal, Secretary to the Government of India, Ministry of Education, 18 April 1967, File 17/36/67-SR Ministry of Home Affairs, pp. 5-8.
161 *Ibid.*

Chandigarh Museum's collection of Pahari paintings was 'the largest in the world, and…of very high quality.'[162] Additionally, it had representative paintings by all the leading contemporary artists of India (or Indian origin), facilitated by tips from his scholar friends, and his Presidency of the All Indian Fine Arts and Crafts Society, New Delhi from 1959 (until his death). It enabled him to, 'skim the cream of all the exhibitions which were held in the premises of the society'[163] resulting in what Grace Morley described as 'one of the most important collections of modern Indian art in the country, perhaps in its size and quality even challenging the collection of the National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi's'.[164] In his turn, Randhawa asserted 'the collection of paintings and sculptures in this museum is more than of regional importance and can be correctly called a collection of national importance.'[165]

He felt that the size of the building and the character of its collections would shape the cultural life of the people, since he was a firm believer in the value, and power of art to provide meaning to life. He planned to integrate it with citizens' daily lives, 'in keeping with the most progressive thinking anywhere in the world on the subject of running art museums.' The prospect of dispersing the collections was therefore 'a matter of grave concern…an unpardonable crime', compounded by the fact that that the value of the collection would be diminished because 'scholars of eminence and repute from all over the world…like W. G. Archer, Robert Skelton, Milo Beach and many others' had,

> 'had access to the finest material of Pahari Painting at Chandigarh only because the collection was unified and housed at one place. The dispersal or division…can therefore be described only as a calamity for the art world. Our effort should be to avoid it, lest posterity also includes us in the black list of destroyers of art and culture.'[166]

If the tender plant of art and art appreciation were to flourish in that part of the country, he argued, this 'national' museum representing almost a quarter century of work,

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[162] I*bid.*
[163] *Ibid.*
[164] Grace Morley's report on the Chandigarh Museum (pp. 7-8), enclosed with letter from M.S. Randhawa to W. G Archer, 11 April 1967, Archer Papers, Mss Eur F236/303.
[165] M. S Randhawa to P. N. Kirpal, Secretary to the Government of India, Ministry of Education, 18 April 1967, File 17/36/67 – SR Ministry of Home Affairs, pp. 5-8.
[166] *Ibid.*

had to be saved. His solution was that the Ministry of Education of the Government of India take the Museum under its wing (through the Union Territory Administration), as he thought the successor states of divided Punjab would not have the resources to run such a major cultural institution.[167]

Aside from his power as Chief Commissioner, Randhawa drew heavily on his transnational network to make his case. Representing an individual, rather than grassroots or community form of transnationalism, both Archer and Morley lived in India as foreign nationals and engaged in cultural activities that took 'place on a recurrent basis across national borders', requiring 'a regular and significant commitment of time by participants' both whilst in India and on their return home.[168] It was also a 'cosmopolitan' one characterised by 'outlooks and practices, a disposition…available…to individuals for the purposes of dealing with cultural diversity, hybridity and otherness…flexible, and sometimes contradictory…a cultural discourse available to social actors…deployed intermittently.'[169] The unpredictable and intermittent element is what explains the uneven nature of the 'openness'[170] (here I am thinking of Archer's comparative lack of engagement with Pakistan or Islamic art and his implicit biases) of 'cosmopolitan patriots' who could be 'attached to a home of his or her own, with its own cultural particularities' and still be open to engaging with the world outside it.[171] It was shaped by the 'significant geographies' of its actors,[172] here the physical and intellectual terrain that shaped developments in discourse on Indian art and museums.

The slippage that allowed Chandigarh's 'national' status mattered. It reiterated Punjab's 'supreme' contributions to a national collection, that carried the imprimatur of the nation, once it became a Territory administered by the Union Government. But for Randhawa, Ganda Singh, Suri, and Chopra, I suggest that what was significant, was

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167 *Ibid.*
168 Alejandro Portes, 'Conclusion', p. 464.
169 Ian Woodward and Zlatko Skrbis, 'Performing Cosmopolitanism', p. 136.
170 Hannerz quoted in Claire Wintle, 'India on Display: Nationalism, Transnationalism and Collaboration, 1965-1986', *Third Text,* 31:2-3 (2017), p. 5.
171 Kwame Anthony Appiah quoted in *Ibid.*
172 Francesca Orsini, 'The Multilingual Local', p. 346.

'Greater' undivided Punjab, enmeshed with colonial geographies that they shared with Archer. Indeed, Randhawa wrote of the Gaddi people of the Kangra Valley:

> 'These unique people who are different from other Paharis, are actually Punjabi…this information surprises most Punjabi people. The word 'Gaddi' means those who comprise all castes…It is usually believed that Gaddi people were displaced during Aurangzeb's time, they fled from Lahore when Aurangzeb was forcibly converting Hindus to Islam…[they]…have carefully preserved their civilisation and culture, and they have not been affected by the light of modernisation yet…They have preserved the old traditions of Punjab, which have now vanished from Punjab with the passing of time.'[173]

Not only had the Kangra Valley been a part of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's Punjab, and thus the art produced there claimed for Punjab's patrimony, but here was a further, tangible link that Randhawa asserted via the Gaddi community. They were the 'pure' 'Hindu' ancestors of the modern Punjabi, living frozen in time in a 'pure' landscape that inspired great art; each a powerful factor that shaped how Punjab's geographies, people and cultures were imagined. Of course, Randhawa's was a simplified — and simplifying — narrative that overlooked the complex history of interaction between nomadic groups and settled communities, as well as the recent vintage of the term 'Punjabi'.

By the end of 1967, the messy business of splitting assets between Punjab and Haryana was over, and Randhawa was free to focus on Chandigarh, especially its museum, assuring Archer that all was indeed well.[174] The official opening on 6 May 1968, took place with great fanfare. Randhawa left no stone unturned to ensure a VVIP guest list and wide press coverage.[175] By then, its position as the "best arranged museum in India"[176] was *already* established on several fronts: its stellar Pahari paintings and Gandhara sculptures; its building, a fine example of Le Corbusier's work; and its ability

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173 M. S. Randhawa, *Aap Beeti,* p. 346.
174 M. S. Randhawa to W. G. Archer, 31 October 1966, Archer Papers, Mss Eur F236/302.
175 Unnumbered boxes among the Randhawa papers at the Government Museum and Art Gallery Library contain the press lists and programme. Also see File 1621, Chandigarh City Museum (accessed at the Government Museum and Art Gallery Library) with correspondence from guests at the inauguration, including Grace Morley. Some of them visited after the opening, such as President Zakir Husain 'Zakir Husain Visits Chandigarh Museum', *The Times of India,* 19 October 1968 (ProQuest Historical Newspapers, accessed 22 May 2017).
176 'Zakir Husain Visits Chandigarh Museum'.

to attract the best in international scholarship. But what the museum *lacked* is as important as what it contained: *there was no object representing Punjab's Islamic heritage or Muslim past.*

I speculate that three factors produced this result over time. Randhawa and Archer's biases and exclusive conception of Punjab as Hindu and Sikh (regardless of whether it reflected post-partition realities or was a deliberate act of erasure) would be one. Taylor Sherman has noted that 'Nehru's secularism had a contradiction at its core'; that 'a sense of Muslim belonging within the Indian nation had to be restored.'[177] But unlike in Sherman's case study of Hyderabad (India), the demographic changes of partition meant there were (virtually) no Muslims left in Indian Punjab to restore a sense of belonging to;[178] so Randhawa could, in fact, ignore them. These two points, combined with their passion for Pahari paintings with courtly Hindu associations, provided grist to the mill.

It must be remembered that museums' mandates over the decades have evolved to become more inclusive,[179] so once again, we must guard against anachronistic expectations. For argument's sake, *if* Randhawa had wanted to be inclusive and represent the full range of the region's history and culture, what *could* he have collected? The options included Kashmiri carpets and shawls (since his 'imagined geographies' included Kashmir) which had been highly prized collectibles for centuries.[180] Lahore had been famous for Mughal armour and Sialkot for metalwork, though their location in West Punjab might be an acceptable reason to omit them.

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177 Taylor Sherman, *Muslim Belonging*, p. 174.
178 See Kripal Singh, *Partition of Punjab* (Patiala: Punjab University, 1972), p. 156.
179 The evolving mandate of museums and the trajectory of museum discourse in South Asia over the twentieth century are covered in Chapter II of this thesis.
180 Chhotelal Bharany, 'Recollections' and Monisha Ahmed, 'Kashmiri Shawls' in *A Passionate Eye: Textiles, Paintings, and Sculptures from the Bharany Collections* ed. by Giles Tillotson (Mumbai: Marg Foundation, 2014), pp. 41-42, p. 97.

Figs 5.11, 5.12 & 5.13: (clockwise from top left) Plaques at the entrance of the Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh, and a view of the entrance with the great pivoting door open.[181]

[181] Images: Author.

Figs 5.14 & 5.15: (above) Signs in the Museum directing visitors to the two regional galleries; (below) entrance to the gallery displaying (mainly) the Museum's Pahari paintings.[182]

[182] Images: Author.

But the trajectory of museum discourse over the twentieth century (discussed earlier) dictated that such objects, which once defined 'museum worthy' since they were 'decorative', ought to be shunned when collecting in independent India. Remember that Randhawa and Archer had insisted (to the Chief Minister) that it was an art gallery and *not* a museum that was an appropriate home for Punjab's fabulous paintings. So, regardless of the official title being 'Government Museum and Art Gallery', it helps explain how they conceived of the institution. How else could India — and Punjab — show that it had 'fine' art unless enough paintings and sculpture were on display?[183] Barring limited examples of domestic Punjabi textiles and manuscripts (which included a single Quran as of 2018), these two categories of objects spanning centuries are what dominate the collection.

A visitor today will find that the inclusion of modern Punjab and Haryana in the museum's remit is explicit. But while Himachal Pradesh's is implicit by virtue of the Museum's Pahari painting collection, the gallery displaying the paintings is titled 'Indian' miniature paintings!

Randhawa's fight to save (as he saw it) the museum when its existence appeared most threatened was, in many ways the finest hour in a career whose shortcomings historians have tended to foreground. He wrote letters and solicited support from every relevant and influential quarter, crystallising in the process, what the Museum meant to *him*, what he thought it meant to Punjab, and India. But what did it mean to Himachal Pradesh, and how does it feature in this story?

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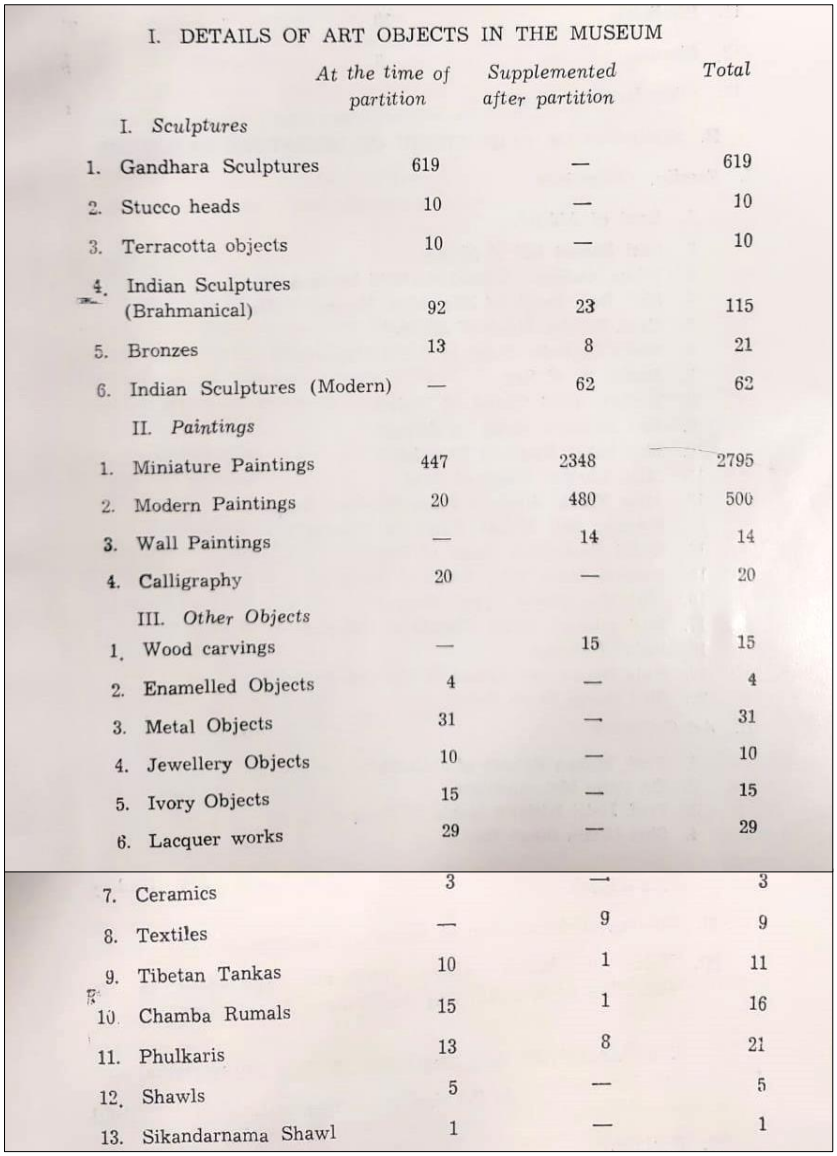
[183] See next chapter for a discussion of the Museum's modern collections. Susan Stronge (ed.), *The Arts of the Sikh Kingdoms* (London: V&A Publications, 1999) was the catalogue of a major exhibition on Sikh art that sought to re-evaluate and correct several erroneous perceptions: that there was no Sikh art before 1800, that Ranjit Singh was averse to the arts in general, and did not patronise any significant architecture in particular. In a similar vein, see Kavita Singh (ed.), *New Insights into Sikh Art* (Mumbai: Marg Publications, 2003); Susan Stronge, 'Maharaja Ranjit Singh and Artistic Patronage at the Sikh Court', *South Asian Studies*, 22:1 (2006), pp. 89-101.



I. DETAILS OF ART OBJECTS IN THE MUSEUM

	At the time of partition	Supplemented after partition	Total
I. *Sculptures*			
1. Gandhara Sculptures	619	—	619
2. Stucco heads	10	—	10
3. Terracotta objects	10	—	10
4. Indian Sculptures (Brahmanical)	92	23	115
5. Bronzes	13	8	21
6. Indian Sculptures (Modern)	—	62	62
II. *Paintings*			
1. Miniature Paintings	447	2348	2795
2. Modern Paintings	20	480	500
3. Wall Paintings	—	14	14
4. Calligraphy	20	—	20
III. *Other Objects*			
1. Wood carvings	—	15	15
2. Enamelled Objects	4	—	4
3. Metal Objects	31	—	31
4. Jewellery Objects	10	—	10
5. Ivory Objects	15	—	15
6. Lacquer works	29	—	29
7. Ceramics	3	—	3
8. Textiles	—	9	9
9. Tibetan Tankas	10	1	11
10. Chamba Rumals	15	1	16
11. Phulkaris	13	8	21
12. Shawls	5	—	5
13. Sikandarnama Shawl	1	—	1

Fig 5.16: This tabulation of the Museum's holdings on the eve of its opening is evidence of Randhawa and Archer's assiduous collecting of Pahari painting for Punjab. It made it possible to imagine the region and nation in their particular way.[184]

184 Image: *Museum and Art Gallery Chandigarh* (Chandigarh: Government Museum and Art Gallery, 1967), pp. 51-52. For several reasons, it is not possible to provide a comparable list for the Punjab Museums and Archives Department: such information is not readily made available to researchers, and the many changes in state ownership led to poor records, and losses. The digitisation project launched in the 2010s under the National Mission on Monuments and Antiquities produced poor quality records, and the website is also faulty. As part of my professional obligations at that time, I was provided the unlikely figure of 1718 objects at the Qila Mubarak and Sheesh Mahal at Patiala, in addition to 3200 medals (no mention of sources of acquisition).

Re-collecting the Kangra Valley for the New Himachal Pradesh

In independent India, language and religion, although often mobilised, are only two reasons for the reorganisation of internal boundaries. Others are federal electoral politics (to serve regional interests of national political parties); political economic factors to improve competition between smaller states or enable better exploitation of natural resources by political elites; or to improve administration. In her study of the breakup of the 'Hindi heartland' states of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Bihar to carve out Uttarakhand, Chhattisgarh, and Jharkhand respectively, Louise Tillin investigates the reasons for the stability — or lack thereof — of internal borders through the varied political dynamics and interactions in these regions. Borders which had remained 'sticky' and 'resilient' during the linguistic reorganisation period became less so thereafter.[185]

In Himachal Pradesh's case, the road to statehood took a full twenty years after Indian independence, and the merger of the constituent princely states in 1948. The latter was not only a matter for rulers to negotiate with the States Ministry of the Government of India, and one another. In several instances, an 'invasion' of *satyagrahis* or protesters demanding popular elected government forced it on them. These were organised by the local Praja Mandal, backed by the All India States People's Conference. The Conference's close coordination with the government at the Centre was no secret; neither was the Government of India's lack of enthusiasm for princely rule. The Himachal rulers' grip on their administration, and their clout, was not as strong as in neighbouring East Punjab; so, it was easy to 'take over' state administrations when law and order threatened to spiral out of control. It created the circumstances for a rapacious and dismissive attitude of the province's bureaucrats towards the former rulers of the region.

Constituted as a province administered by a Chief Commissioner at first, it was later promoted to the status of a Lieutenant Governor's province which allowed for an

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185 Louise Tillin, *Remapping India: New States and their Political Origins* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 1-26. Also see Rama Sundari Mantena, 'The Andhra Movement, Hyderabad State, and the Historical Origins of the Telangana Demand: Public Life and Political Aspirations in India, 1900-56', *India Review*, 13:4 (2014), pp. 337-357.

elected legislature despite being a Union Territory administered by the central government.[186] For despite being rich in mineral and forest wealth, development in the region was inadequate on several fronts such as the economy, infrastructure, and administration. The Government of India's view was that only *it* had the requisite manpower and resources to invest on the required scale (even though the same argument failed to work in the 1950s for the 'Hindi heartland' states, whose borders remained untouched until more recent decades).[187] By the 1960s, the lack of stellar progress on development led to calls for greater local autonomy to decide on local priorities. Himachal was also sucked into the unavoidable politics of neighbouring Punjab. There were frequent demands to merge Himachal into Punjab which Himachal opposed, and countered by calls to unite the hills on the basis of a common language and culture (celebrated as the 'great reunion of Himachalis'[188]). Such a merger would also bring a larger swathe of natural resources to the territory. Although its current boundaries were drawn in 1966, Himachal Pradesh gained full statehood only in 1971.

This might explain the rather different trajectory of museums in the state. The Bhuri Singh Museum, Chamba, was the oldest in Himachal Pradesh, established in 1908 in what was then a princely state. After Chamba's integration, plans for reorganising and expanding it as a museum for the Territory came to nought because all efforts and funds were directed towards development. 'A few' 'Kangra paintings' were purchased (two).[189] Despite this, N. C. Mehta, the Chief Commissioner of Himachal Pradesh, had written to Dr Tara Chand at the Ministry of Education, emphasising the Territory's superior artistic heritage, which he thought warranted financial investment. He argued for the importance of developing archaeology and the Centre's obligation to do so, since the Territory was dependent on New Delhi. He praised the 'outstanding monuments from the 17th century downwards in respect of paintings — monuments which cannot be equalled in any other

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186 V. P. Menon, *Integration of the Indian States* (London: Sangam, 1985), pp. 297-300.
187 Louise Tillin, *Remapping India,* pp. 41-46.
188 P. K. Sharma, *Political Aspects of States Reorganisation in India* (New Delhi: Mohun Publications, 1969), p. 233.
189 *Indian Museums Review 1958-1959* (New Delhi: Ministry of Scientific Research and Cultural Affairs, Government of India, 1960), p. 21.

part of India'.[190] He was unsuccessful in his attempts to involve N. P. Chakravarti (Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India), who cited a shortage of staff and resources for his inability to help. Mehta believed that:

> 'these handicaps should be removed, particularly in this part of the country, for apart from the intrinsic value of the remains of the past, we have got the unrivalled advantages of wonderful landscape, the projection of which to our countrymen here and the people abroad would be a matter of the greatest importance from the larger national standpoint.'[191]

Himachal Pradesh too was party to the nation-wide effort to survey and collect historic materials, endorsed by the resolutions of the Indian Historical Records Commission 'recommending that the records and manuscripts in the custody of the Rulers should be preserved in accordance with scientific principles and made accessible to bonafide historical research.'[192] The Commission addressed the former rulers in language that was part-request and part sanctimonious lecture, citing the 'enthusiastic interest evinced by the general body of archivists, historians and antiquarians in this country in the rich collections of historical materials which may be in the possession of Rulers.'[193]

The Government of India asked for information on whatever material they had in their custody, promising that it would 'consider steps necessary for their upkeep and scientific treatment' and would advise Their Highnesses accordingly.[194] Having already required rulers to maintain, and grant access to, items of national significance from their personal property,[195] the state was still interfering, in the 'interests' of the people, who were forever pitted against their former rulers from this perspective. As in the case of Punjab, the language of progress, science and modernity undermined the notion of royal

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190 N. C. Mehta to Dr Tara Chand, Secretary, Ministry of Education, 'Publication of Antiquities of Chamba, Antiquities of HP', p. 9, File 75-2/48, Himachal Pradesh State Archives.
191 *Ibid.*
192 'Template from the Ministry of States to Pramukhs of Part B states by Name', dated 13 June 1951, following an earlier demi-official letter from M. K. Vellodi, Ministry of States, File 75-2/48.
193 *Ibid.*
194 *Ibid.*
195 Ministry of States, *White Paper,* p. 65.

custodianship. For Government, to take over and care for 'national' heritage was a way to both assert (over former rulers) and gain (in the eyes of the nation) legitimacy.

Internally, the tone was much more brusque; even rapacious. A memo from M. K. Vellodi of the States Ministry to N. C. Mehta did not shy away from suggesting that, 'In connection with the settlement of private properties of Rulers, several instances have been noticed in which the Rulers had claimed old manuscripts as the private property.' This was not acceptable 'in the wider interests of the nation', which dictated that 'historical documents and rare manuscripts should be preserved carefully in a central place' specified by the Government of India (though this contradicted the terms of settlement of rulers' private property). He did not mean only those 'which have been acquired in States out of public funds', but 'even where such manuscripts and documents are admittedly the private properties of the Rulers they may in the interest of historical research, like to make a gift of them to the nation'. He asked Mehta to 'enlist' their co-operation.[196]

In response, a Mr. Antani dismissed the idea that,

> 'any of the other Rulers could have these things. Perhaps Koti — whose father was a religious man with knowledge of Sanskrit and Ayurveda may have some manuscripts. We may find out from Baghat also if he has any. Others are too prosaic to have thing [sic] of cultural value.'[197]

Regardless, Mehta decided that it would be 'worthwhile' to issue a standard letter to 'all the rulers…except in respect of Sirmur, Mandi, Chamba, Suket and Baghat', to whom he wanted to write to himself.[198]

The Rana of Koti's response was mid-range on the possible spectrum: he said no, but with a valid reason and sincere apologies. He regretted that he had,

> 'no old manuscripts and other documents of Historical importance which could be offered for the National Archives at Delhi. We had some such rare antiquities which were unfortunately destroyed in the great fire in 1898 at Kiar Capital.'[199]

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196 M. K. Vellodi, Ministry of States to N. C. Mehta, 14 June 1949, 'Old Records Mss and Antiquities of Historical Importance', File G-9-4/49, Himachal Pradesh State Archives.
197 Noting dated '18.6.49' signed 'Antani' on Vellodi's letter cited above, *Ibid.*
198 Noting dated '9.8.49' by N. C. Mehta on Vellodi's letter cited above, *Ibid.*
199 Basisth Singh Chandar, Rana of Koti to B. K. Acharya, Deputy Chief Commissioner Himachal Pradesh, 2 September 1949, *Ibid.*

After this initial surge to collect and promote local cultural history (including a book project on the antiquities of Himachal Pradesh in 1948[200] and to collect folk songs[201]) came a lull,[202] only broken when statehood appeared within reach. All of a sudden, efforts began on several fronts. As in East Punjab, PEPSU, and New Delhi, the fulfilment of political aspirations was tied to state efforts to showcase the past, to harness the legitimacy that this gave the state as custodian.[203]

One such effort was the Rang Mahal murals. The National Museum had removed them from their crumbling location in the Rang Mahal Palace in Chamba, to its own premises for conservation. According to the agreement made at the time, the National Museum was to retain a quarter of the murals and return the rest whenever Himachal Pradesh wanted them back, especially once work began on its own regional museum. When the Bhuri Singh Museum's first curator V. C. Ohri (who was only appointed in 1962[204]) attempted to have them returned, the Government of India, whilst happy to oblige:

> 'very politely mentioned that the exhibition of the painted room and the verandah of Rang Mahal as it is reconstructed at the National Museum has attracted wide notice from around the world, which in a way has meant bringing to the notice of the International Community, Chamba Artists.'[205]

They hoped that the Himachal Pradesh government would not insist on the return of all the panels, 'in the larger interest of the artistic remains of our country.' Under the circumstances, the official view was that Ohri should:

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200 'Publication of Antiquities of Chamba, Antiquities of HP', pp. 10-11.
201 'Collection of Himachal Pradesh Folk Songs', File G-101-136/49, Himachal Pradesh State Archives.
202 At least, based on the archival evidence. I was able to find no other files at the Himachal Pradesh State Archives about such initiatives, and it is also substantiated by Ohri's approach to collecting (discussed later).
203 This sentiment also comes across in books published in the late 1960s on the state's history that seek to present it as a continuous, cohesive narrative and culture. For example, R. K. Kaushal, *Himachal Pradesh: A Survey of the History of the Land and its People* (Bombay: Minerva Book Shop, 1965).
204 Amar Nath Khanna, 'Revival of a Museum in Decay' in *The Diverse World of Indian Painting: Essays in Honour of Dr Vishwa Chander Ohri,* ed. by Usha Bhatia, Amar Nath Khanna, Vijay Sharma (New Delhi: Aryan Books International, 2009), pp. xiii-xiv.
205 'BSM [Bhuri Singh Museum] — Correspondence re Chamba Museum 1965', p. 23-24, Himachal Pradesh State Archives.

> 'get back the panels which are worth exhibiting in his Museum at Chamba with mutual consent of National Museum and…not insist upon the withdrawals of paintings which are usefully being displayed in the National Museum.'[206]

The situation in Himachal Pradesh was unlike what had prevailed within PEPSU, when the National Museum had obtained items from Kapurthala that it later had to return. Although Himachal too was a union of former princely states, the states in question were minor, with a fraction of the wealth, resources, and visibility that PEPSU commanded. The 'darkness' and 'problems' that characterised the development discourse of the Indian state[207] affected perceptions of poor regions like Himachal Pradesh, without the benefit of a legacy of 'hardiness' and 'courage' that partition had bestowed on Punjab next door. The regional politics of the weeks and months following August 1947 are also relevant. A situation in which rulers were forced to give up power reportedly at the point of a revolution, as happened at Suket,[208] contrasted with Patiala, where the ruler had had every expectation of retaining his independence, if not sovereignty.

Recent history, which had required Himachal to be 'saved' from its rulers in more obvious ways than elsewhere in India, combined with the province's low economic ranking meant it was a 'poor relative' of sorts. Added to this was the fact that it was administered by the central government, making it something of a fief. Therefore, although couched in terms of benefits accruing to Himachal, I suggest that the predatory tone in which central administrators coveted manuscripts was in part a consequence of the relative weakness and visibility of the Himachal states.

The urgency over the Rang Mahal murals might have also stemmed from the fact that the National Museum had purchased another mural from the state — from Kulu — in 1962, thus putting it out of Himachal's reach. In that instance, it was M. S. Randhawa who had intervened, first to have the murals copied when he 'discovered' them at the

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206 *Ibid.*

207 Srirupa Roy, *Beyond Belief: India and the Politics of Postcolonial Nationalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), Chapter III; V. P. Menon, *Integration.* Everything was characterised as a 'problem'.

208 Menon, *Integration,* pp. 298-299; R. L. Handa, *History of Freedom Struggle in Princely States* (New Delhi: Central News Agency, 1968).

palace of the Rai of Rupi while on tour in the Kulu valley. He drew Grace Morley's attention to it with a recommendation to acquire it.[209] Yet, the visibility that these murals were providing the Territory further explains the official directive to Ohri, to work in cooperation with the National Museum over the Rang Mahal murals.

In 1966, Himachal Pradesh was still a Union Territory and yet to become a state. So it is possible that one reason for the compromise was that the Territory administration did not wish to antagonise a central institution. If its art were on view as a national treasure, how could anyone think the Territory undeserving of statehood? It had recently made a case for the Kangra Valley and other territories from Punjab to be merged with it, which had been successful. But until that moment, collections from Kangra had been acquired for both Chandigarh and New Delhi as *Punjab's* contribution to Indian art. Now there were other collections from the same region, with a rather different message. It was also an opportunity to assert regional ownership.

For instance, the Bhuri Singh Museum had lent an album of twenty-two paintings of the legend of Usha and Aniruddha for the Royal Academy exhibition of 1947-1948. The National Museum retained them for display on the same condition as the Rang Mahal murals. Ohri decided it was time for the album to return. He was blunt, pointing out that, 'by now the collection through purchase has grown to a very big volume in the National Museum, New Delhi and thus the said museum should not have any hesitation to return our exhibits.'[210]

Meanwhile, as the debate over Chandigarh's fate and the status of its museum collections and other assets raged, a Mr. Hari Ram of Karnal raised the stakes in September 1966. He had heard 'from a reliable source that' a case was being made to keep the 'State Museum and Archives [at Chandigarh] in the proposed Punjabi Suba', and pointed out that since Punjab already had 'a regional Museum at Patiala', everything in Chandigarh could 'safely' shift to Haryana, adding that the new Kurukshetra University there would benefit a great deal from the collections. In the interest of fair distribution and an eerie echo of partition, he recommended setting up 'a small committee of experts

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[209] M. S. Randhawa, *Indian Paintings*, p. 215.
[210] V. C. Ohri to The Director of Education, Himachal Pradesh, 27 May 1966, 'BSM', pp. 18, 27. Also see Amar Nath Khanna, 'Revival of a Museum in Decay', pp. xv-xvi.

representing both the new states' so that 'neither side is deprived of this cultural heritage.'[211] But Himachal Pradesh was absent from this picture, so the Territory swung into action to find out whether it was entitled to any of the collections.[212]

Ohri insisted that there were 'sufficient grounds for dividing the collections in Chandigarh and Patiala Museums' so that Himachal got a share of what he saw as a collective patrimony, including 'certain objects of Artistic and historical value originally obtained as 40% share from Lahore museum'.[213] As Himachal Pradesh was the source of most of the Pahari paintings in the Chandigarh Museum, there was, he asserted, an 'emotional cry for their retention in new H. P.'[214] He also marshalled a host of other reasons: that it was more relevant to research a work of art in its original provenance; that regional histories were most often written by local experts; the distance from Chandigarh which would reduce local access to the collections (reversing Suri's argument to move the collections from Shimla to the plains); the need for samples of Gandhara sculptures in Himachal Pradesh because of its influence over all of North India; and the potential needs of yet-to-be-established universities. His final argument was based on the unassailable logic that, 'since all assets are being distributed, division of art treasures thus becomes a rightful claim'.[215]

Rup Singh Phul, an advocate from Hamirpur joined the fray with a passionate appeal to the Governor of Punjab, copied to the Home Minister, Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh; and the Chairman, Assets & Liabilities Committee. He wanted to 'bring home' to them 'the feelings of the Punjab Hill Area people…about the division of the museum located at Chandigarh and Patiala.'[216] He thought it was 'too well known to need any mention' that the paintings from Kangra were world-renowned, and that the valley and adjoining regions were the source of the Chandigarh Museum's collection. Now that these regions were all going to be merged with Himachal, he felt that:

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211 'BSM', p. 25.
212 Copy of letter dated 3 November 1966 forwarded from Director of Education to V. C. Ohri, 'BSM', p. 42.
213 'BSM', pp. 43-44.
214 *Ibid.*
215 *Ibid.*
216 Undated correspondence but stamped 1966, 'BSM', pp. 46-47.

> 'Forty percent of the pictures collected…[from Kangra and adjoining areas] deserves to be allocated to the Himachal Pradesh', in addition to 'other articles of historical importance…which were mostly taken from the fortresses and Darbars of the Hill Rulers…symbolic of our great cultural heritage.'[217]

It was only fair that they should be 'restored…to the people and the areas, from which these were acquired', to become 'a subject of study' for locals and visitors, a way of spreading education, and 'would surely be a source of inspiration to the coming generation.'[218] He thought that it would support the local government's efforts to revive this distinctive style of painting for which,

> 'a centre at Andretta near Palampur in District Kangra, is already at work…On this score too the transfer of this most valuable and historical wealth to the Himachal Pradesh is very essential…it is prayed that the articles…may be kindly handed over…'[219]

It is interesting to speculate on the significance of Andretta as the location for this proposed school (Ohri vetoed the idea, but it is unclear whether this was enough to sink it or whether the thinking changed). The village became famous as a haven for Punjabi theatre when Norah Richards moved there in 1924. A former stage actor, she brought her passion for drama and Punjabi theatre from Lahore, where she had lived with her husband Philip Richards, Professor of English Literature at Daly College. At first, she had returned to England after his death in 1920, but her heart was in India. She came back with the conviction that India was "destined to inaugurate a cultural civilisation", settling in the Kangra Valley to pursue her dream of fostering the 'humanising' power of theatre.[220]

An obituary in 1971 credited her with being 'among the first to dispel the prejudice which made so many once look upon Punjabi as "a rustic tongue". She pioneered the revival of Punjabi drama and helped thousands to discover its rich and vivid folk

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217 *Ibid.*
218 *Ibid.*
219 *Ibid.*
220 B. Krishna, '87-Year Old Recluse of Indomitable Spirit', *The Times of India,* 6 September 1964 (ProQuest Historical Newspapers, accessed 30 September 2019).

heritage.'[221] Despite Andretta's remoteness, her reputation drew many other creative and artistic people such as Sobha Singh to live and work in the village, especially from Lahore, and after partition.[222] It became an iconic representative of Punjab's culture and its living heritage. As a consequence, the proposed scheme to locate a school for the revival of Pahari painting in this village the minute the Kangra Valley merged into Himachal Pradesh cannot *but* signal an attempt to reclaim the land and its artistic past; to reunite them after a Punjabi hiatus.

As long as Chandigarh remained a Union Territory, the Museum's collection was safe, in the sense that none of the three contenders could grab it. If that changed at a later date, and the Government of India allotted the city to either Punjab or Haryana, Himachal Pradesh worried that it would no longer have a claim to its 'world famous' Pahari paintings. On the cusp of merger with Himachal, the Kangra Valley still had a tangible claim to paintings in the Chandigarh Museum, but once merged into Himachal, Ohri and the Himachal administration (not just the politicians) feared that the latter could have no stake in any later division of assets, to which only Punjab and Haryana would be party.[223]

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221 'Current Topics: Norah Richards; Diptheria', *The Times of India,* 9 March 1971 (ProQuest Historical Newspapers, accessed 30 September 2019).
222 'Sobha Singh, Painter, Dead', *The Times of India,* 23 August 1986 (ProQuest Historical Newspapers, accessed 30 September 2019); A. S. Raman, 'I Only Want to Paint Beauty', *The Times of India,* 14 September 1986 (ProQuest Historical Newspapers, accessed 30 September 2019).
223 'BSM', pp. 12-13, 50-68.

Fig 5.17: Norah Richards' cottage at Andretta as of 2018.[224] It was renovated in 2002 by the Andretta Campus of Punjabi University, according to the notice in front.

[224] Image: Author.

This explains why Himachal Pradesh continued to pursue some portion of the collections until 1970[225] (including linking its claims with Haryana's for strategic reasons),[226] despite the Centre's decision that the Chandigarh Museum's collections had 'passed to the Union' and were now 'under the charge of the Chandigarh Administration.'[227] Citing the valuable nature of the items, the Government of India declined to split them up, but suggested instead that 'if the Himachal Pradesh Govt. desire to have any of these collections on loan for short periods, they may take up the matter with the Chandigarh Administration.'[228] Planned or otherwise, as a result of this decision, the Government of India was now able to claim direct custody of among the most valuable collections in the country, without the trouble of persuading and cajoling rulers, which, as we have seen, was time consuming and not always successful. In becoming a Union Territory, Chandigarh had fulfilled its promise: imagined as 'A Radiant City of Asia'[229] and a symbol of the new India, the city along with its museum collections had become the national beacon for art.

It was of course M. S. Randhawa who had persuaded the Government of India to leave the collections intact, and 'obviously the place for it is the Chandigarh Museum built at a cost of Rs. 25 lakh.'[230] His blunt counter to the Himachal Pradesh claim was to point out that he had, in his private capacity, advised them to 'collect Pahari paintings from the hill areas' as early as 1949. He had even suggested to 'Shri N. C. Mehta when he was Chief Commissioner of Himachal Pradesh…that he should start a museum at Simla. But for building a personal collection,' Randhawa noted acidly, 'Shri Mehta did nothing in this regard.'[231] Since paintings were still to be had even though the Himachal Pradesh

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225 'Current Topics: Museum Row', *The Times of India,* 15 October 1970 (ProQuest Historical Newspapers, accessed 23 May 2017).
226 Noting dated '25.5.1969', 'BSM', pp. 1-2.
227 Copy of unaddressed letter dated 9 June 1967 from the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, *Ibid.*, p. 105.
228 *Ibid.*
229 'Punjab's New Capital Springs to Life: Chandigarh, Symbol of Hope to Millions "Radiant City of Asia"', *The Times of India,* 7 October 1953 (ProQuest Historical Newspapers, accessed 22 May 2017).
230 M. S. Randhawa to the Joint Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, 17 June 1967, 'BSM', p. 103.
231 *Ibid.*

Government had not yet moved on the matter, Randhawa called their bluff and suggested that they allocate an annual fund of Rs. 50,000 to build their own collection.

> 'If they can lay claim to these paintings merely on the ground that they belong to hill areas then not only the Museum here but all the Indian Museums would have to part with their collections to satisfy this artistic impulse.'[232]

Such a comment was calculated to frighten the Government of India into thinking that it might be deluged by similar claims. Its implication was (and does) have subversive potential: if museum collections are the 'props' that we use to make real our enacted histories, questioning how and from where objects were collected (as this thesis does) could have led identities — and polities — cultivated with care to break apart.

Randhawa also misrepresented the underlying impulse: it was not artistic, but political. Even if one of Randhawa's motivations to collect was his own aesthetic enjoyment of Pahari paintings combined with a drive to educate his fellow-Punjabis, he was alive to its wider political and propaganda potential. The exchange also uncovers the sometimes-fraught relations within the small circle of art collectors and connoisseurs, in this case between Randhawa and N. C. Mehta (who Randhawa respected for his fine eye, but suspected of underhand methods of acquisition). Mehta's family gifted his collection to the nation after his death,[233] whereas Randhawa only acquired for institutions, rather than for himself.[234]

Over seventy years after Independence, only two recent publications address individual contributions to (or roles) in building post-independence and postcolonial national collections. The dearth suggests one among many possible (and real) reasons why the Indian public today sees museums as irrelevant colonial relics, despite frequent and passionate accusations of 'insults' to one's culture in popular discourse when museum objects are 'slighted'. Pratapaditya Pal's *In Pursuit of the Past* is an invaluable volume, tracing the many collectors of Indian art from 1875-1950 (both Indian and

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[232] *Ibid.*

[233] W. G. Archer to M. S. Randhawa, 22 July 1958, Mss Eur F236/301.

[234] Randhawa's sister's account suggests that institution-building was an early habit with him. She recalled his drive to collect funds for a school building, and linked his interest in libraries and reading as a child (it was how he learned English, and it explains his rather stiff style writing style) to his frequent efforts to establish them later in life. M. S. Randhawa, *Aap Beeti,* p. 53-55.

foreign), noting the nationalist ideas that influenced acquisitions, the movement of collections from older princely hands into modern private ones, and then to museums around India and the world.[235] In contrast, Giles Tillotson's edited volume on the Bharany Collection explores the collecting practices of a single family, the father-son duo of Radha Krishna and Chhote Lal Bharany; the son later gifted some of the collection to the National Museum.[236] To be certain, these volumes document very different styles of, and motivations for collecting. But the difference between Randhawa and Mehta, further points to the central roles that individuals play in shaping public institutions. That is why investigating their agendas is essential for deconstructing the museum.[237]

Despite being hard-hitting, Randhawa's rebuttal helped Ohri press his case for an appropriate budget, and an art purchase committee headed by an energetic, committed and influential civil servant, like Randhawa and modelled on his methods.[238] He chafed at the delays which meant acquisition budgets rarely kept up with market prices, and deplored the 'dealers and unscrupulous persons' who,

> 'with strenuous efforts actually fished out such objects…through various means. Paintings are also being exported illicitly, though there is a law that no object of more than 100 years old can be taken out of the country'.[239]

Ohri prophesied the gratitude of future generations if 'a vast and important collection of Pahari paintings' which had 'a respected place in world art' were housed centrally in the state capital.[240] His plea got through: the committee was formed by the end of 1967, with Pahari paintings topping the wish-list of objects 'chiefly…concerning

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235 Pratapaditya Pal, *In Pursuit of the Past: Collecting Old Art in Modern India, Circa 1875-1950* (Mumbai: Marg Foundation, 2015).
236 Giles Tillotson, *A Passionate Eye: Textiles, Paintings, and Sculptures from the Bharany Collections* (Mumbai: Marg Foundation, 2014).
237 This is an emerging area of research. Claire Wintle demonstrates the continuing influence of donors on museums, and how they interpreted collections in 'Consultancy, Networking, and Brokerage: The Legacy of the Donor in Museum Practice', *Journal of Museum Ethnography*, 23 (2010), pp. 72-83. Kristina Phillips is alert to the role of individual directors. See Kristina K. Phillips, 'A Museum for the Nation: Publics and Politics at the National Museum of India', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Minnesota (2006).
238 'BSM', pp. 130-131, 139.
239 *Ibid.,* pp. 123-124.
240 *Ibid.*

the art and craft of Himachal Pradesh.'[241] Ohri tapped varied sources in addition to art purchase committees. He sought gifts of collections, conducted surveys, and pursued loans (intending to supplement them later by exchange) from other related museum collections such as the Sir Pratap Singh Museum in Srinagar (from where he asked for examples of woodwork in 1973 because of the influence of Kashmir art in some parts of Himachal Pradesh).[242]

Around the same time, there was also a drive to collect information about temples and sculptures for documentation,[243] with forms sent to tehsildars for further distribution. Taken together, these efforts appear a late but nevertheless determined effort to catch up. Once the Territory became a state, and with progress to show for a State Museum, Ohri revived the issue of the Rang Mahal murals. The National Museum had transferred six panels to Chamba and installed them *in situ* in 1969 to observe how they responded to the environment. They were fine; so Ohri asked his government to press for the remainder.[244] Around the same time, there was a small bureaucratic incident over a team of Punjab University anthropologists who found fossils in Bilaspur (part of Himachal Pradesh). In the ensuing correspondence, officials acknowledged the value of such discoveries to the whole nation, but asked for the head office to be kept informed remarking, 'no body can tolerate that people from some outside state start doing any thing they like without due notice.'[245]

Ohri was transferred to Shimla in 1973 as the Curator of the new State Museum (in addition to his responsibilities at Chamba);[246] it opened in 1974 (in a re-purposed colonial building), even as efforts to acquire collections continued. As of 2018, it was in the midst of a phased renovation, in which the painting galleries have been revived first, with walls painted in primary colours, and expensive woodwork showcasing the Museum's finest holdings. A large television screen occupies a central space in the line of paintings,

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241 *Ibid.*, p. 139.
242 'Collection of Art and Cultural Objects from Kashmir and Other State Govts', File 37-2/72, Himachal Pradesh State Archives.
243 'BSM', p. 278.
244 V. C. Ohri to the Director of Education, Himachal Pradesh, 4 May 1971, 'BSM', p. 160.
245 'BSM', pp. 39, 226-227.
246 Amar Nath Khanna, 'Revival of a Museum in Decay', p. xv.

playing a documentary on loop. Recently produced by the local Lalit Kala division, it recounts the histories of the various Pahari schools, artists, and their masterpieces. It notes that the best museums in the world collected Pahari paintings, including the Chandigarh Museum; offering pride as one possible response to resolve the sensitivities around ownership. It celebrates the passion and admiration that the paintings inspired in prominent scholars from W. G. Archer and M. S. Randhawa to B. N. Goswamy and V. C. Ohri, and in doing so, reinforces the Museum's own worth as well as the paintings'. The contested claims[247] over the shared heritage of Pahari paintings in the Chandigarh museum show that the 'many nationalisms'[248] within the Indian nation remain alive and well.

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[247] David Lowenthal, 'Identity, Heritage and History' in *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* ed. by Johnathan R. Gillis (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 49.
[248] Joya Chatterji, 'Nationalisms in India, 1857-1947' in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Nationalism* ed. by John Breuilly (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 242-264.

Figs 5.18 & 5.19: (below) The Himachal State Museum; and (above) its renovated Pahari painting gallery.[249]

[249] Images: Author.

Figs 5.20 & 5.21: (left) The Museum of Kangra Art at Dharamshala, the capital of the District; and (right) its painting gallery. In the introduction to the gallery, Kangra art is described as India's gift to the world. The gallery was filled with contemporary painting when I visited in 2018.[250]

[250] Images: Author.

VI

AESTHETIC DISCOURSE AND NATION-BUILDING

Fig 6.1: Mir Bannu or Balwant Singh watching a firework display, Nainsukh, c. 1751, Punjab Hills, purchased in 1912 from A. K. Coomaraswamy.[1]

[1] Image: © Victoria & Albert Museum, Museum number IM.5-1912.

Introduction

'Discourses *about* the nation-state are constitutive *of* the nation-state;'[2] so also, discourses surrounding Indian art and aesthetics are relevant to understanding the contours of Indian art history.[3]

But in addition, aesthetic discourse is *also* a conversation *about the nation-state*, as this chapter will show. Disseminated through publications and validated through display in museums, art history is part of 'a combined institutional site that [has] defined the contours of an official discourse and produced the whole space of the national in art'.[4] It has constituted the nation as much as public spectacles such as the Republic Day parade. Srirupa Roy interprets the latter as an opportunity for the state to demonstrate and reassert its relevance and value by presenting itself as the neutral platform on which the full diversity and competing interests of the many communities of India can find a place.[5] In other words, the state justifies its existence not only because it represents a unified nation of people, but because it is the glue holding disparate, incongruous pieces together.

The museum performs a similar institutional role. But as we have seen from the post-partition collecting practices examined in this thesis, it is not a neutral platform. Indeed, it has never been one, whether in the colony or the postcolonial nation-state. But it would be a mistake to think that the state is the only player. This thesis has demonstrated that a lot hinged on networks of art historians, archaeologists and museologists: all their personal relationships, tastes, and biases shaped these institutions in manifold ways. Regional politics and learning to 'do' bilateral relations of several kinds

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[2] Srirupa Roy, *Beyond Belief: India and the Politics of Postcolonial Nationalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), pp. 16-17. Emphasis in the original.
[3] Kavita Singh, 'Museums and the Making of the Indian Art Historical Canon' in *Towards a New Art History: Studies in Indian Art* ed. by Shivaji K. Panikkar, Parul D. Mukherji, Deeptha Achar (New Delhi: D. K. Printworld, 2003), pp. 335-357.
[4] Tapati Guha-Thakurta, *Monuments, Objects, Histories: Institutions of Art in Colonial and Postcolonial India* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2004), p. 195.
[5] Srirupa Roy, *Beyond Belief.*

through 'mutuality',[6] contest and cooperation also played a role in museums' eventual configurations.

In this chapter, I focus on M. S. Randhawa and W. G. Archer's aesthetic discourse on Pahari painting and Indian art, circulated through journals and publications. Combined with their institutional collecting and networks, I argue for its key role in constructing a Punjab-centric, Hindu vision of India.

On the Cusp of Independence

The 'Art of India and Pakistan' exhibition held from November 1947-February 1948 at the Royal Academy in London, was a pivotal moment of flux. On the one hand, it was a public opportunity to acknowledge India's 'coming of age' in the modern world. On the other, since the exhibition had an Indian organising committee, it could be shown to be a collaborative venture between equal partners.[7]

Sarojini Naidu's telegraphed message on the occasion of the inauguration, was a pointed Indian intervention in the aesthetic discourse in Britain about India, as much as political performance. It asserted the dominant nationalist view of Indian art's imaginative and unique 'spiritual' quality. Also, despite India cleaving to a secularism in which all religions were treated as equal, and the fact that the exhibition did contain multi-religious art, the rhetoric around this exhibition lent a Hindu slant to the discourse around Indian art. For instance, Percy Brown, author of a preview of 'The Forthcoming exhibition at the Royal Academy' wrote,

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[6] Joya Chatterji, 'An Alternative History of India-Pakistan Relations', lecture delivered at the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, London, 8 March 2012 [https://backdoorbroadcasting.net/2012/03/joya-chatterji-an-alternative-history-of-india-pakistan-relations/, accessed August 2019]; Pallavi Raghavan, 'The Finality of Partition: Bilateral Relations Between India and Pakistan, 1947-1957', PhD thesis, University of Cambridge (2012), recently published as Pallavi Raghavan, *Animosity at Bay: An Alternative History of the India- Pakistan Relationship, 1947-1952* (London: Hurst & Co., 2020).

[7] Representation for Pakistan became relevant only after partition, by which time most loans from undivided India had been shipped to London; the details are covered in Chapter I of this thesis.

> 'it is generally accepted that the frescoes of Ajanta, or the rock carvings of Mamallapuram, Ellora, and Elephanta, represent the culmination of Indian artistic achievement […] That the underlying impulse which determined the character of most of these works of art was essentially spiritual...'[8]

All the sites he mentions are either Hindu, or Buddhist, which Hindus enfolded within their own multifaceted faith.

Yet, at the same time, Kavita Singh has uncovered unorthodox views among some of the British curators of the London show — Kenneth de Burgh Codrington, Basil Gray, and John Irwin. Keen to promote Indian art for what it was, and augmented by important publications throughout their careers, they played a critical role in what she refers to as the 'instatement of Indian art' as art.[9]

Dr Hermann Goetz,[10] who might have been considered old guard, echoed these views in his review of the catalogue of the Royal Academy show. He commended it for reinstating at its core the non-specialist enjoyment and public appreciation of Indian art. To him, the focus on its formal qualities redressed both past European condemnations and the later 'esoteric or nationalistic fetish, idolizing Indian art as a sacred mystery which only the initiated could approach.'[11] It appears, therefore, that the nationalist reading of the London show was somewhat overstated, both at the time, and by later scholars.

In the second iteration of the exhibition, this time titled 'Masterpieces of Indian Art' and held at Government House (earlier Viceroy's House and today Rashtrapati Bhavan), the sentiment was better achieved. Although based on the Royal Academy exhibition, it was presented to and consumed differently by, an Indian audience for

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[8] Percy Brown, 'The Forthcoming Exhibition at the Royal Academy', *Indian Art and Letters*, 21:1 (1947), pp. 59-60.
[9] Kavita Singh, 'Museums', p. 344.
[10] The German-origin historian of Indian art who was Director of the Baroda Museum and Picture Gallery from 1939-1953, and subsequently the first Director of the National Gallery of Modern Art 1954-1955.
[11] Hermann Goetz, 'A Landmark in Indian Art History: The Art of India and Pakistan', *Marg,* 5:2 (1951), p. 40.

whom it was an opportunity to pay homage to the nation, and provided an early template for the National Museum.[12]

Yet despite the debt owed to what Kavita Singh has identified as a 'third position', and its 'keen' proponents,[13] neither factor signalled an immediate turnaround. Consider for instance Brown's comment above on the sites he thought represented the peak of artistic achievement (a common view). They range from the second century BCE Ajanta caves, to those of seventh century CE Elephanta. He went on to observe that the collections chosen for the Royal Academy,

> 'show clearly that they were produced in a sympathetic environment, as it is obvious an appreciation of art was instinctive, constituting an integral part of the nation's being: so that here is truly the living voice of the people.'[14]

The next peaks of Indian art (by his account) were in the first millennium when Europe was in the 'dark' ages; and he ended his article lauding the Indian mind, measured by the impact that it had historically had on the rest of Asia.

Although Indian 'antiquities' had now become 'art', as per Brown's summary, its pinnacle was located in ages past; and yet it was also declared the living voice of the people. The effect was to suggest that the voice of the living nation of his time (i.e. the twentieth century) spoke in the artistic language of a millennium or more in the past. Further, by consigning the peak of Indian artistry to the distant past, Brown tied the twentieth century artist to that moment: in other words, any art produced in modern India had to be ancient in style to have any substance. The implication was that there was no modern Indian art worth mentioning.

In his lecture on the Royal Academy exhibition delivered on 4 December 1947[15] Basil Gray remarked,

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[12] Both Kavita Singh and Tapati Guha-Thakurta have commented on this. Kavita Singh, 'The Museum is National' in *India: A National Culture?* ed. by Geeti Sen (New Delhi: Sage Publications/ India International Centre, 2003), pp. 176-196; Tapati Guha-Thakurta, *Monuments, Objects, Histories,* pp. 175-204.
[13] Kavita Singh, 'Museums', p. 344.
[14] Percy Brown, 'The Forthcoming Exhibition', pp. 59-60.
[15] Basil Gray, 'The Art of India and Pakistan with Special Reference to the Exhibition of the Royal Academy' *Indian Art and Letters*, 21:2 (1947), pp. 65-71, including vote of thanks. He was one of the curators, and part of the British Committee's delegation to India.

> 'I think it should be known that the selection is ours; not, therefore, what India and Pakistan wish to represent them to the West, but what the delegation judged to be the most representative of their art. The standard that we held before us was to admit only objects of art and not documents of archaeology, history or ethnology.'[16]

The charge to admit only objects of art appears in the minutes of the Royal Academy's own planning meetings, and is consistent with the 'third position' under discussion. But what is telling is the explicit distinction Gray made between what India and Pakistan might have wanted represented, versus the selection committee's views on what best represented them (the Indian committee had wanted more 'modern' art). It reveals a 'we know better' attitude, and assured his audience of the high (British) standards maintained throughout (whilst exposing insecurity over loss of control, noted in Chapter I). A younger scholar than Percy Brown and as admiring of Indian art, Gray delivered a similar overall message: that Indian art had its apogee centuries ago; or if it was more recent, nevertheless emerged from 'traditional' i.e. dated world views. This orientalist view lingers. For instance, the Victoria & Albert Museum has only recently begun collecting modern Indian design, whereas twentieth century collections have existed for other regions for many years.[17] It is against this wider context of the re-evaluation of historic Indian art that the effects of aesthetic discourse on nation-building is positioned.

Museums and Aesthetic Discourse

Scholars have had much to say about the ritualised and performative space of the museum,[18] and of how such practices were aligned with older traditions of stewardship

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[16] *Ibid.,* p. 66.
[17] Divia Patel, 'Cycles of Change: Re-presenting the Collection — Again' paper delivered at a conference titled 'Putting South Asia on Display', British Museum, London, 28 September 2018.
[18] An influential piece is Carol Duncan 'Art Museums and the Ritual of Citizenship' in *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display* ed. by Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine

or custodianship which rulers — and later the colonial regime — used to legitimise their position. For instance, Firuz Shah Tughlaq not only moved an Ashokan column to grace his new palace and city of Tughlaqabad, he also repaired the Qutb Minar, and added two storeys to it. The first thing that Babur did after conquering Delhi was to visit the tombs of his predecessors, demonstrating his munificence by paying for their upkeep.[19] The postcolonial nation-state did something similar with museums and by taking over the role of preserver of a subcontinent's past, reproducing and naturalising itself through this particular cultural institution. What is more, this happened on three levels: the regional, the national, and the international.

The fact that the postcolonial state used museums in this way has not previously been investigated at the level of regional museums such as the Chandigarh Museum (or indeed, the Bhuri Singh Museum in Himachal Pradesh). The national and international aspirations of the Chandigarh Museum, as discussed in the previous chapter, were in place from its inception, because Chandigarh itself represented hope and renewal — not just for East Punjab, but for India and Asia. M. S. Randhawa and W. G. Archer gave form to it through their collecting practices; enmeshed with, and shaped by, their partialities and passion for a certain vision of Punjab.

But over and above this, to understand the building blocks of what exactly was the 'national in art',[20] we also need to dissect the aesthetic discourse that accompanied 'national' collections and displays of art in the early years of nation-building. How did works come to be designated as national, and what was *their* impact in producing the nation (rather than merely reflecting it) through museum display? Kavita Singh has

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(Washington, D. C.; London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), pp. 83-103; Simon J. Knell, Peter Aronsson, Anne B. Amundsen, Amy J. Barnes, Stuart Burch, Jennifer Carter, Vivianne Gosselin, Sarah A. Hughes, Alan Kirwan (eds.), *National Museums: New Studies from Around the World* (London; New York: Routledge, 2011); Peggy Levitt, *Artefacts and Allegiances: How Museums Put the Nation and the World on Display* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015).

[19] Giles Tillotson, *Delhi Darshan* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2019), pp. 33-34; Simon Digby, 'The Tomb of Buhlul Lodi', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 38:3 (1975), p. 556. The other implication of this point, which Nayanjot Lahiri makes, is that Indians had an established tradition of preserving material remains, even if it was not articulated in the language of heritage preservation. See 'Archaeology and Identity in Colonial India', *Antiquity,* 74:285 (2000), pp. 687-692.

[20] Tapati Guha-Thakurta, *Monuments, Objects, Histories*, p. 195.

examined W. G. Archer's seminal role in reconfiguring the internal hierarchies of the Indian art historical canon by elevating painting to sit at par with sculpture as the apotheosis of art from the subcontinent.[21] However, as I will demonstrate, he and his network did more. While transforming conceptions of Indian art through its painting, their scholarship also positioned Pahari painting at the apex, *and* as *Punjab's* exclusive contribution.

The question has never been asked — in the wider context of Indian art historiography, why and how did Pahari painting (and by extension Punjab) achieve this status? What was its impact on the way museums in India and abroad collected and interpreted art? What did this kind of institutional collecting facilitate? Broken down further, I seek to take stock of publications on Indian art that came out between 1947 and 1980, and the ideas they presented. What kind of art did they highlight? What proportion dealt with painting, especially Pahari painting? What kind of narrative did this generate or permit, and as key actors in this arena, what did Randhawa and Archer's networks enable (or disable)?

Publishing Indian Art in the Twentieth Century

By the middle of the twentieth century, a variety of local firms, institutions, and governments, as well as international bodies like UNESCO and the Victoria & Albert Museum, published on South Asian art. Their writers were of varied origin and location, as were their readers. Journal subscriptions sold far from their places of publication. Indian art writers and their audiences were a part of a larger milieu of scholarship and art history, often based in different countries. They read one another's publications, engaged each other in debate and argument, or collaborated in the production and furtherance of knowledge of the art of India. It was a small, cosmopolitan, transnational group within the much larger international art world, but no less active despite it.[22]

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[21] Kavita Singh, 'Museums'.
[22] F. S. Aijazuddin, *The Counterfoils of My Years, 1942-1971* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 2008), p. 172.

In this chapter I scrutinize three types of publications sourced from representative institutional libraries:[23] a) journals, which had both a local and global audience; b) books on Indian art; and c) museum guidebooks. They represent a range of sources that engaged with their subject(s) at different levels of intensity. Books are either specialist volumes, or surveys of art that allow comparative approaches; museum guides are aimed at the general reader and highlight what the institution or curator thought was important to share with visitors; and scholarly journals on South Asian and Indian art published with regularity from 1947-1970, balance the books and their scope.[24] Published over decades, the journals also allow one to track evolving ideas about Pahari painting within a broadly consistent world of writers and readers over time.

Of these, I focus on three journals,[25] chosen to be representative as well as comparative of Indian and international perspectives on Indian art. *Indian Art and Letters* was the journal of the Royal India Society (after 1947, the Royal India, Pakistan, and Ceylon Society), published from 1925-1963. It is valuable for straddling the twentieth century, during which the various 'schools' of thought on Indian art developed, and key events such as partition took place. Being published from London, it also allows us to track the changing views of the colony from the metropole.

Roopa Lekha was the journal of the All India Fine Arts and Crafts Society, (AIFACS) published from 1928-1988. It covers a similar timespan and offers the counterpoint from New Delhi, potentially with a different audience (members included artists, for instance) and circulation figures (more on this later). It is also a key primary printed source as it was the main publishing platform for M. S. Randhawa and his network. It featured lively debates on the 'correct' interpretation of paintings or book reviews, in response to articles published within its pages and elsewhere.

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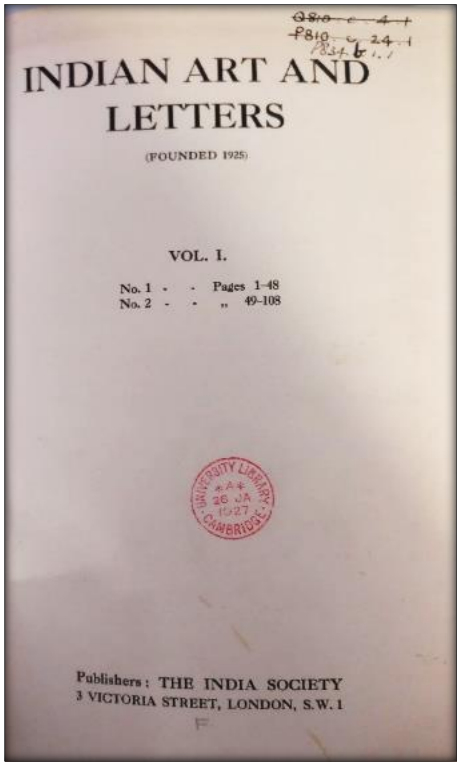
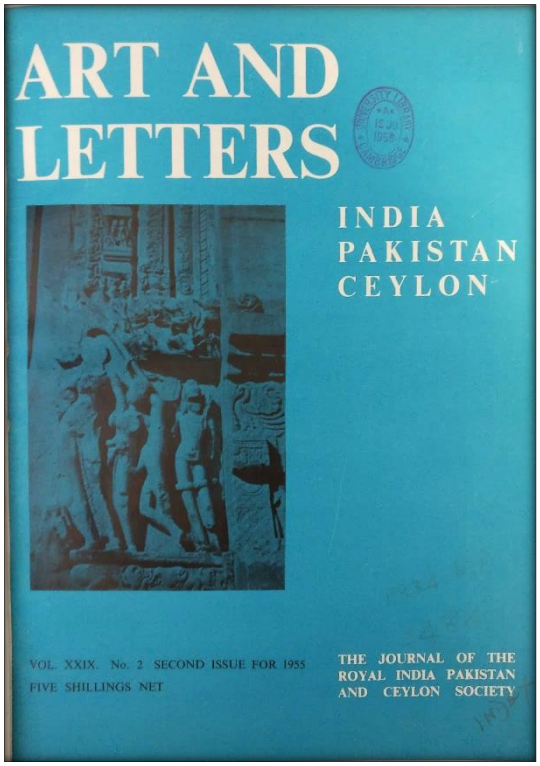
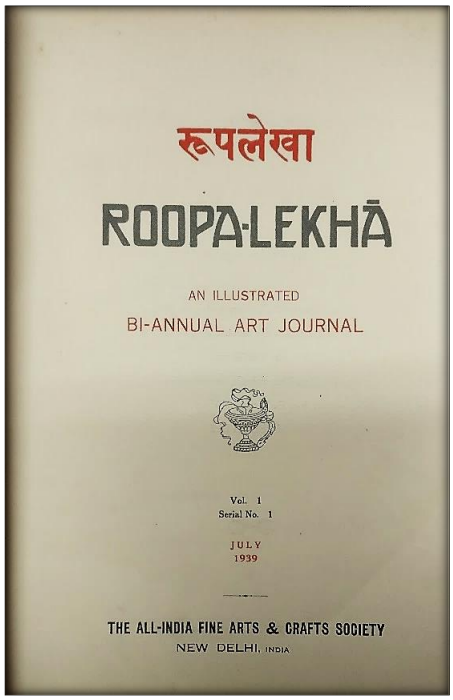
[23] National Museum Institute, Lalit Kala Akademi, AIFACS Library (India); The National Art Library, Ancient India and Iran Trust, Cambridge University Library (UK).
[24] These were supplemented in the public domain by popular publications like the *Illustrated Weekly of India* and *The Times of India Annual*. See Devika Singh, 'Approaching the Mughal Past in Indian Art Criticism: The Case of MARG (1946-1963)', *Modern Asian Studies*, 47:1 (2013), p. 174.
[25] I have also consulted *Lalit Kala: A Journal of Oriental Art, Chiefly Indian*, the journal of the Lalit Kala Akademi from 1955 [rebranded in 1985 as *Lalit Kala (Ancient)*], and *Rupam*, later published as *The Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art*. They support my argument, but I have refrained from citing them as I was unable to find complete, or close to complete sets.

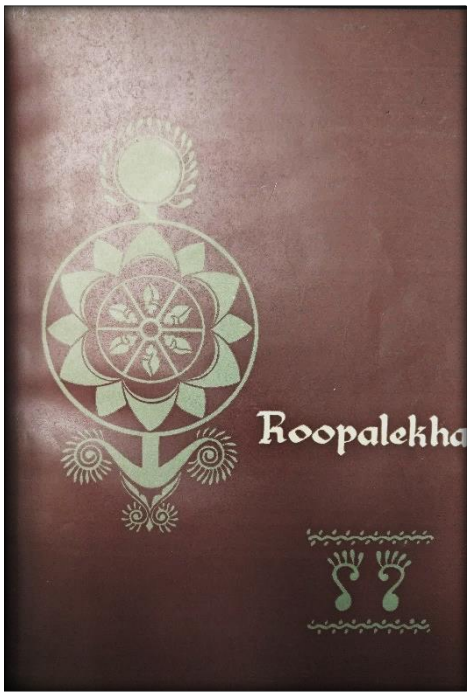


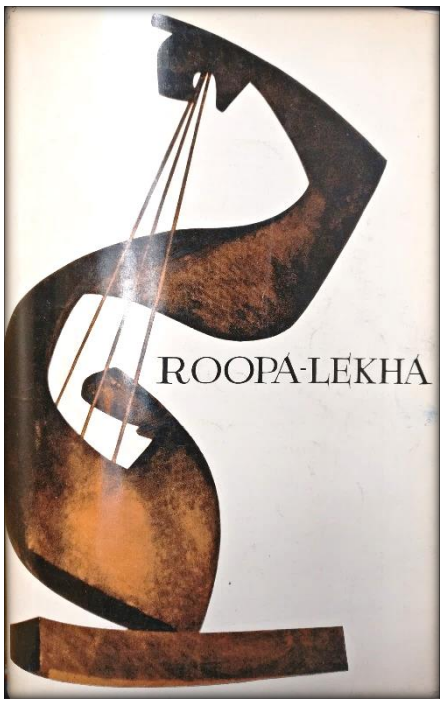


Figs 6.2 & 6.3: Evolving covers of Indian Art and Letters from Vol 1 (left) to Vol 29 (right).[26]

[26] Images: Author. Courtesy Cambridge University Library.







Figs 6.4, 6.5, 6.6: (left) Roopa Lekha in the 1930s; (right) after Randhawa became Chief Editor in 1958; and (below) in 1968.[27]

[27] Images: Author. Courtesy the AIFACS Library. The name was sometimes rendered *Roopa-Lekha* and *Roopalekha*. I use *Roopa Lekha* unless quoting from sources that spell it differently.

Marg began as a magazine of art and architecture in 1946. It was not only a new venture but a symbolic one, founded as it was, right before independence. It continues to be published from Bombay (today Mumbai) as a magazine for the arts, and set the gold standard for art journals published in India — it could be 'compared with any good art journal in the world'.[28]

The journals provide insights into the wider art historical debates within which one can place Archer, Randhawa, F. S. Aijazuddin and other significant names, whose books were reviewed within their pages. They allow us to trace the emerging framework that the journals helped create, for understanding, interpreting, and valuing Indian art. Since the writers were also museum curators and administrators, the printed word intersected with the museum world — why and how it collected, and interpreted art.

The focus of my study is on the period 1947-1970 but it is also on key actors and their networks. Consequently, I have noted related publications by the same author that fall outside that range; and journals whose series begin or end on either side of these dates. Of course, there are limits to this exercise: every title published in the period will not appear. Rather, the goal is to discern the ideas originating from the Randhawa-Archer network set against the bigger 'space of the national in art'.[29]

Pakistan does not feature as much in this survey for both factual and speculative reasons. There were fewer articles published on, and journals devoted to, painting in Pakistan in my period of study, and only a small number of publications on art that were available to consult. One obvious source, the Lahore Museum's Bulletin, was in abeyance between 1947 and 1990.[30] The two journals consulted — *Ancient Pakistan* (by the Department of Archaeology of the University of Peshawar starting in 1964) and *Pakistan Archaeology* (by the government Department of Archaeology, from 1964), predictably

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[28] H. D. Sharma (ed.), *Handbook of Indian Research Journals* (Varanasi: Indian Bibliographic Centre, 1997), p. 151.
[29] Tapati Guha-Thakurta, *Monuments, Objects, Histories*, p. 195.
[30] The Lahore Museum appears to have been allowed to fall into neglect until the late 1960s. Personal communication, S. R. Dar, and A. Rehmani (former Directors), March 2018. Also see Carrie Anne LaPorte, 'Displaying Empire? The Architecture and Development of Museums in Nineteenth-century India', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Pennsylvania (2003), pp. 273-279; Shaila Bhatti, *Translating Museums: A Counterhistory of South Asian Museology* (London; New York: Routledge, 2012).

focussed on archaeology, art in conjunction with craft and architecture, and sculpture, especially Gandhara. This bias in my research was compounded by the challenges of an Indian citizen gaining access to archives in Pakistan.

I have discussed the motivation for Pakistan's championing art from the Gandhara region and the more ancient remains of the Indus Valley in earlier chapters. Although pertinent to historical narratives justifying the creation of Pakistan, investigating their role in aesthetic discourse about the Pakistani nation is outside the scope of this thesis.[31] In India of course, although ('Pakistani') Gandhara art was admired and claimed as evidence of deep roots and pedigree, 'indigenous' Buddhist sculptural art soon displaced it in art historical discourse. In turn, this was superseded by the heights that Hindu Gupta art achieved, or so the narrative went.[32]

There were also compelling reasons for Pakistan to look away from the painting legacies of the subcontinent. They include Muslim cosmopolitan networks which Pakistani artists tapped to 'avail...of an alternative universe offered by transnational modernism'; the foregrounding of an Islamic identity for Pakistan; the 'relatively new' discipline of 'Islamic art';[33] the legacy of partition; and geopolitical affinities. Together, they compelled Pakistan's eyes to turn westwards, towards the heart of Islam. For instance, when the Lahore Museum at last contemplated a catalogue of its painting collection after its renovation and inauguration in 1967, the management's priority was Mughal paintings, rather than its Rajput or Pahari material,[34] in much the same way that nationalist Indian art history eschewed Mughal art in favour of Hindu.[35] The emphasis is also noticeable at the Lok Virsa Museum in Islamabad, dedicated to the country's 'folk' heritage.[36]

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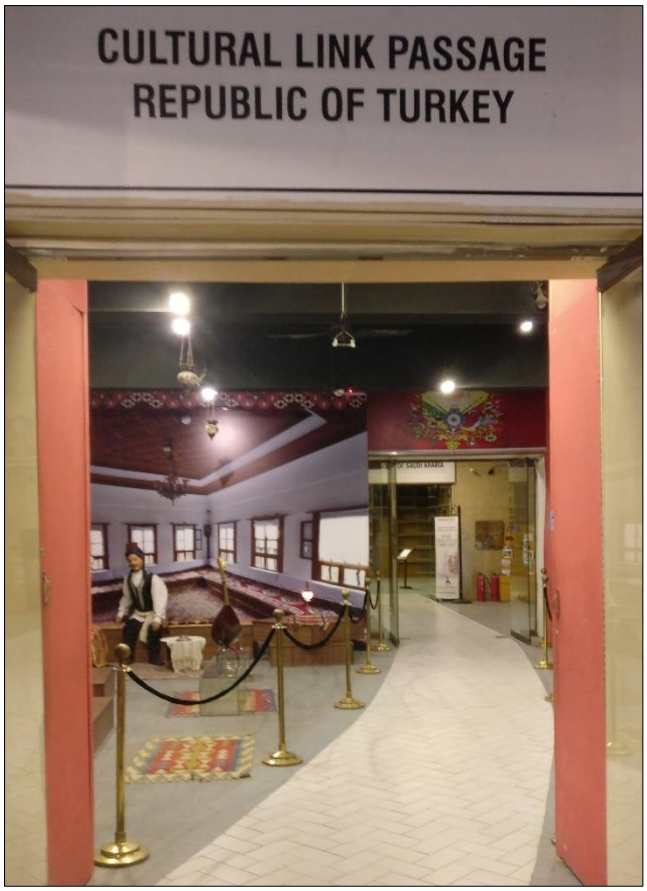
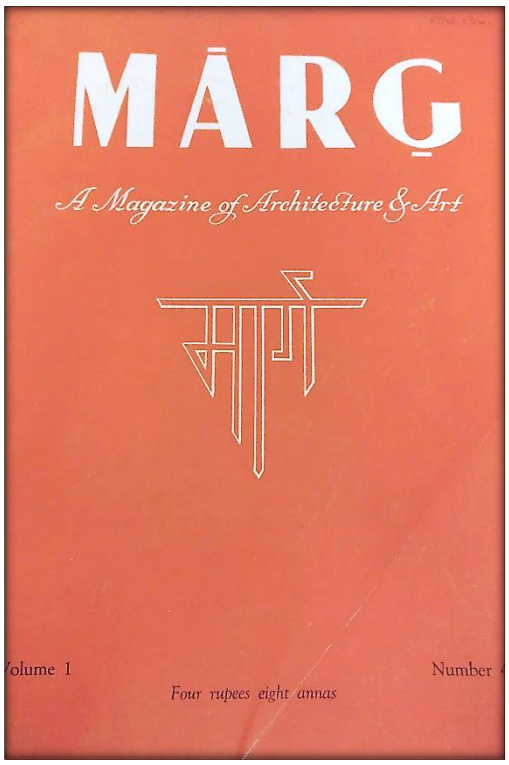
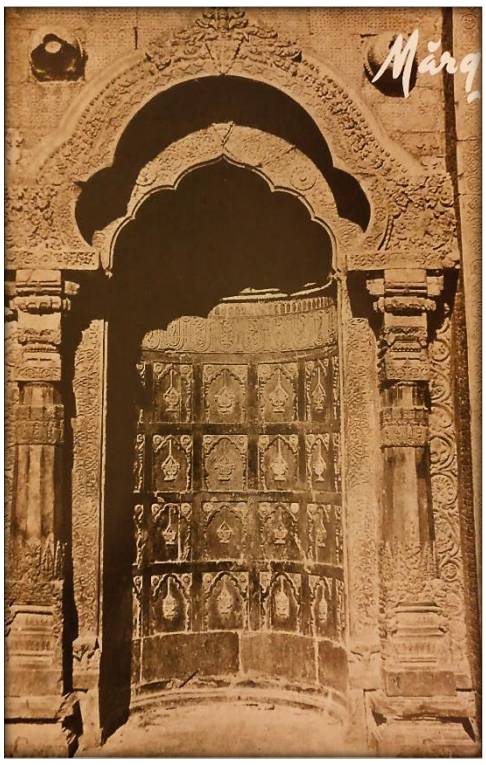
[31] So is a discussion on the competition between the older established Lahore Museum, and the new National Museum at Karachi, noted by both LaPorte ('Displaying Empire?') and Bhatti (*Translating Museums*). It offers fascinating scope for further investigation.
[32] Kavita Singh, 'Museums', p. 346.
[33] Iftikhar Dadi, *Modernism and the Art of Muslim South Asia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), pp. 30-31.
[34] F. S. Aijazuddin, *The Counterfoils*, pp. 222-234.
[35] Devika Singh, 'Approaching the Mughal Past'.
[36] Based on personal observation, March 2018.



Figs 6.7, 6.8, 6.9: Inside the Lok Virsa Museum Islamabad, with (above) displays on Turkey; (below left) Kazakhstan; and (below right) Azerbaijan, connecting them with the crafts and 'folk' cultures of Pakistan.[37]

[37] Images: Author.





Figs 6.10 & 6.11: Evolving covers of Marg from Vol 1 No. 4 (left) to Vol 27 No. 2 (right).[38]

[38] Images: Author. Courtesy the Ancient India and Iran Trust.

The internal political developments and dissensions within Pakistan outlined earlier, culminating in the eastern wing seceding to form Bangladesh, are additional factors that help to explain the irregular publication schedule of the two journals consulted. They appeared for less than six years until 1970-1971, after which issues became erratic and sporadic. It is in fact an exciting opportunity for research; for just as scholarship on partition was defined by the experiences of the Punjab until Joya Chatterji's pathbreaking work on Bengal, there is very little research available on the division of cultural assets between West Bengal and East Pakistan,[39] or between Pakistan and Bangladesh. Furthermore, the question of how the museum and the profession negotiated and (re)interpreted the aftermath of both 1947 and 1971 for public presentation, remains unexplored.[40]

Art Publishing and the Public Sphere

Scholarship on the history of the book and print technology in South Asia has established that although not unaware of European printing presses in their 'coastal enclaves', Indians began to engage with print technology only between 1820 and 1840. But it happened with such rapidity that by the 1850s in North India, 'indigenous newspapers, vernacular textbooks and tracts, cheap religious publications and valuable texts of the high literary traditions all started to appear in print.'[41] Francesca Orsini has demonstrated that the 'capacity of print technology…to be multilingual' was an important factor in the process of indigenisation, given the many languages that were used in parallel. It enabled diverse audiences to be addressed, even as it created new

[39] On other assets, see Anwesha Sengupta, 'Breaking up Bengal: People, Things and Land in Times of Partition', unpublished PhD thesis, Jawaharlal Nehru University (2015).
[40] There is some work on the Liberation War Museum, but nothing in line with the questions posed in this thesis. See for example Nayanika Mookherjee, '"Never Again": Aesthetics of "Genocidal" Cosmopolitanism and the Bangladesh Liberation War Museum', *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 17 (2011), pp. S71-91.
[41] Francesca Orsini, 'Pandits, Printers and Others: Publishing in Nineteenth-century Benares' in *Print Areas: Book History in India* ed. by Abhijit Gupta and Swapan Chakravorty (New Delhi Permanent Black, 2004), pp. 126-127.

alignments between language, printed text and "communities of knowledge",[42] which in turn had political repercussions as specific languages and scripts became markers of discrete (often religious) groups.[43]

Orsini borrows Habermas' model of a 'public sphere' as a space in which "'private citizens [came] together as a public" to discuss matters of "public concern" or "common interest'", and applies it to the intermediate space of 'social institutions like the club, journals and periodicals'.[44] She highlights the 'enormously influential' role that journals in particular played in 'validating and encouraging new tastes' in literature, and their immense and growing popularity as a format for reading in the decades leading up to the 1940s. Notwithstanding her regional and linguistic focus, the overall message gained is of an ever more entrenched presence of the journal among the reading public,[45] for whom access to printed material was greatly enhanced by networks of libraries.

The need to debate public concerns and the availability of public spaces in which to do so could be mutually constitutive.[46] In other words, if journals constituted a kind of public sphere, the latter was shaped as much by readers' tastes and concerns as it,[47] in turn, shaped a common culture. I build on these ideas to suggest that the art journals of the twentieth century offered a similar platform through which to articulate, debate and thus shape ideas of the nation. They effected this by discussing the relative merits and

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[42] Christopher Bayly quoted in Francesca Orsini, *The Hindi Public Sphere, 1920-1940: Language and Literature in the Age of Nationalism* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 126-127; Francesca Orsini, 'Pandits, Printers and Others'.

[43] Francesca Orsini, 'Pandits, Printers and Others', pp. 126-127. Also see Anindita Ghosh, 'An Uncertain "Coming of the Book": Early Print Cultures in Colonial India', *Book History,* 6 (2003), pp. 23-55; Anindita Ghosh, *Power in Print: Popular Publishing and the Politics of Language and Culture in a Colonial Society* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 5.

[44] Francesca Orsini, *The Hindi Public Sphere*, p. 9 (Jürgen Habermas cited in fn.12).

[45] Also see C. Ryan Perkins, 'From the *Mehfil* to the Printed Word: Public Debate and Discourse in late Colonial India', *Indian Economic and Social History Review,* 50:1 (2013), pp. 47-76.

[46] Priya Joshi shows that contemporary Indian thinkers were alive to the possibilities that consuming the same popular fiction could have, for spreading a shared common culture. Priya Joshi, 'Trading Places: The Novel, the Colonial Library and India' in *Print Areas,* pp. 52-53.

[47] There is evidence that this continued after independence, and scope for widening the enquiry over a variety of journals and magazines (both genre and language). Aakriti Mandhwani, '*Sarita* and the 1950s Hindi Middlebrow Reader', *Modern Asian Studies,* 53:6 (2019), pp. 1797-1815; Aakriti Mandhwani, 'Everyday Reading: Commercial Magazines and Book Publishing in Post-independence India', unpublished PhD thesis, SOAS, University of London (2018).

failings of the nation's artistic heritage, encompassed by collections in its 'national' museums, and in some cases, private collections as well.

Ulrike Stark flags the impossibility of pinning down definitive numbers for a reading public. Rather, she aims to show that 'the common reader and the mass reading public certainly existed as potential categories in commercial publishers' minds'.[48] It is likewise difficult to establish circulation figures for English-language art journals — *Marg* reported 20,000 in 1997,[49] but many of these would have been libraries, leading to a wider reach than individual subscriptions. To cite two cases, the University of Cambridge Library, and the Victoria & Albert Museum's National Art Library have sets of all journals referred to in this chapter (albeit differing in completeness). So, despite Stark's caveat, there is still value in analysing their content, in attempting to reconstruct the thrust of the aesthetic discourse that they helped to shape and promote, and to speculate on the reasons behind it.

Given the high-octane politics around language, and the fact that India was awash in vernacular print and presses by the middle of the century, and also the political symbolism of eschewing English, it is noteworthy that all the journals referred to were published in English. Every literary sphere had exclusions built into it, whether of women, social groups or cultural practices, so it is logical to assume that editors knew that the decision to publish in English would exclude many readers.[50] But it was a choice they made nonetheless, perhaps with a view to their projected readership: elite and English-speaking. It is ironic that discussions in print on art (and its importance in education) were generally conducted in English, accessible to a minority of the population. And this was *despite* the professed desire to educate the 'masses'; the essential need to engage with art to be truly 'alive' as individuals, and a nation. Instead, 'the written word became an essential tool for ordering power relations in the cultural sphere',[51] its

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[48] Ulrike Stark, *An Empire of Books: The Naval Kishore Press and the Diffusion of the Printed Word in Colonial India* (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2007), p. 17.
[49] H. D. Sharma (ed.), *Handbook of Indian Research Journals* (Varanasi: Indian Bibliographic Centre, 1997), p. 151. I was unable to access the Audit Bureau of Circulation figures for *Marg*'s latest figures, and my emails to the Marg office went unanswered.
[50] Anindita Ghosh, *Power in Print*, p. 5-7. Orsini also notes the exclusive nature of literary spheres.
[51] *Ibid.*, p. 5.

print form lending it greater authority; akin to the 'making (and maintaining) of social hierarchy through the monopolization of taste-making'[52] in art.

Yet one cannot discount the continuing power of precolonial and colonial non-literate, multi-lingual networks of communication and translation, through which people acquired and shared information. So it is possible to speculate that some of the contents of these art journals made their way into the wider public sphere, if not in the same form, then through other avenues, especially through newspaper reports and features.[53]

Randhawa included a large section on his engagement with Pahari painting along with a synopsis of his art historical research in his autobiography (written in Punjabi). The book (and with it, Randhawa's conceptions of Punjab's people, history, and geography through its art) remains in print, and in circulation.[54] A later volume on Randhawa edited by award-winning Punjabi short story writer Gulzar Singh Sandhu is titled 'Punjab da Chhewan Dariya',[55] meaning 'Punjab's sixth river',[56] and an arts and literary festival named in his memory was inaugurated as recently as 2018.[57] His words and legacy continue to shape public discourse in Punjab, thereby making Randhawa a topical subject of enquiry, and not a 'historical' one alone.[58]

Another route for circulation was Punjabi translations of Randhawa's English publications, such as the Punjab Sahitya Akademi's translation of Randhawa's *Kangra Valley Painting* discussed in the previous chapter. It prompted a public debate in not just

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[52] Vera L. Zolberg, 'Taste as a Social Weapon', *Contemporary Sociology,* 15:4 (1986), p. 512; Pierre Bourdieu and Richard Nice (trans), *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (London: Routledge, 1986).

[53] Examples can be found in Files 1846, 1848, Government Museum and Art Gallery Library, dedicated to press clippings on art matters between 1959-1965; Devika Singh, 'Approaching the Mughal Past'.

[54] First printed in 1985, a recent reissue dates to 2014.

[55] Jaspal Singh, 'A Tribute to Dr M. S. Randhawa', *The Tribune,* 28 April 2002 [https://www.tribuneindia.com/2002/20020428/spectrum/book9.htm, accessed 6 July 2020].

[56] The sobriquet is a marker of popular esteem and has also been 'conferred' on other eminent personalities from Punjab.

[57] 'Navjot Singh Sidhu Inaugurates Randhawa Memorial Festival', *Babushahi.com,* 3 February 2018 [http://www.babushahi.com/view-news.php?id=68934&headline=Navjot-Singh-Sidhu-Inaugurates-Randhawa-Memorial-Festival, accessed 6 July 2020].

[58] For the continuing influence of donors on museums and how they interpreted collections see Claire Wintle, 'Consultancy, Networking, and Brokerage: The Legacy of the Donor in Museum Practice', *Journal of Museum Ethnography*, 23 (2010), pp. 72-83.

one but three languages (Punjabi, Hindi, and English), and showed how aesthetic discourse intersects with the politics of the region and the nation. In doing so, the incident challenged the 'aesthetic criteria of disinterestedness, purity and difficulty'[59] that art history as a discipline requires of us, regardless of individual points of view (otherwise why would we need art historians to explain art to us?). These, as the Sahitya Akademi fracas showed, were 'the polar opposite of aesthetic conceptions prevalent among middle- and lower-class groups'.[60]

Art Publishing and Pahari Painting

Indian Art and Letters (*Art and Letters* from 1948) was the journal of what began as the India Society in 1910. After 1947 and decolonisation in South Asia, it was renamed the Royal India, Pakistan, and Ceylon Society. Anglophone supporters of Indian art like A. K. Coomaraswamy,[61] and E. B. Havell had established it to counter the notion that India (South Asia) did not produce any fine art. It was a direct riposte to the notorious comment by medical surgeon-turned-naturalist and expert on industrial arts, George Birdwood: he had declared in 1909 that "boiled suet pudding" would serve as an adequate substitute for any 'fine art' that India might hope to possess.[62] These were the

[59] Vera L. Zolberg, 'Taste as a Social Weapon', p. 512.
[60] *Ibid.*
[61] Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy was a pioneering Indian art historian of Ceylonese-English parentage. Although his fame is established, he is currently a trending subject of scholarly study, with at least two works expected, from Prof Pratapaditya Pal, and Dr Brinda Kumar. Dr Laura Weinstein, personal communication, April 2019. Also see Pratapaditya Pal, 'A Tale of a Collector and Curator: The Ross-Coomaraswamy Bond', *Asianart.com,* 16 August 2017 [http://asianart.com/articles/coomaraswamy, accessed 4 March 2019].
[62] This is a well-known and widely quoted incident which took place at the Royal Society of Arts. George Birdwood's response to a Javanese Buddha image was, "A boiled suet pudding would serve equally well as a symbol of passionless purity of soul". For a greater discussion of this episode, and the India Society's transnational and diverse artistic networks being central to Britain's encounter with India, see Sarah Victoria Turner, 'Crafting Connections: The India Society and the Formation of an Imperial Artistic Network in Early Twentieth-Century Britain' in *India in Britain: South Asian Networks and Connections, 1858-1950,* ed. by Susheila Nasta (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp. 96-114.

years of polemical and public debates about India's art, whose most famous antagonists were Birdwood and Havell. The latter came from a family of artists and publishers, was Principal of the Schools of Art in Madras (1884-1892), and then Calcutta (1896-1906). He was passionate about and devoted to the cause of Indian art, even if his approach towards it remained paternalistic.

By the early twentieth century, Mughal painting had acquired a 'second wind' and renewed collectability in India.[63] In Europe and America, it had outgrown the 'Indo-Persian' label ascribed by dealers (meaning, *almost as good as* Persian, and much less expensive), in large part, due to Havell and the India Society's proselytising efforts, including through its flagship publication, *Art and Letters*.[64] Rajput painting however (painting from the Hindu courts of Rajasthan and the Punjab Hills), was only just being 'discovered' (a large part of it by dealers like Radha Krishna Bharany).[65]

Despite being a pioneer of sorts, *Art and Letters* had a conservative look. It was not until the 1950s that monochrome images appeared on at least a part of the all-text cover, and accompanied articles. In the years between 1945 and the last volumes published in 1963, the contents ranged from articles on Art (which included architecture, sculpture, and painting), Archaeology, Literature/ Letters, Music, Dance, Religion and Philosophy, to reviews of books and exhibitions. They covered a wide geographical area, stretching from the Indian subcontinent to include East Asia and Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), reflecting and buttressing the nationalist idea of 'greater India', by which India was celebrated for its artistic and cultural contributions to — or hegemony over, depending on one's perspective — other parts of Asia.

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[63] Terence McInerny identifies two great waves; the first as part of the 'bibliophilic' collecting traditions that lasted until the first quarter of the nineteenth century when British cultural attitudes towards India soured and hardened. Terence McInerny, 'On Collecting Indian Miniature Paintings: Twentieth-Century Issues and Personalities' in *Intimate Worlds: Indian Paintings from the Alvin O. Bellak Collection* ed. by Darielle Mason (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2001), p. 2.

[64] As well as other publications circulated to members. See Sarah Victoria Turner, 'Crafting Connections'; she emphasises in particular the role of visual representations of Indian art and their circulation.

[65] See Giles Tillotson (ed.), *A Passionate Eye: Textiles, Paintings, and Sculptures from the Bharany Collections* (Mumbai: Marg Foundation, 2014).

Every issue had at least one article on Indian art, or art connected to India (for example, a sculpture originating from Southeast Asia, but of a Hindu deity). A rough count shows 35 features about either painting or art, over a period of 18 years. There were occasional articles on Pakistan's art, culture and archaeology, the Indian National Museum, or the Pakistan archaeology department. There were two special issues of note. The first by W. G. Archer was on the William Rothenstein Collection of Indian Paintings and Drawings[66] (which the Victoria & Albert Museum acquired through Archer's efforts; several were Pahari); the other was dedicated to Rabindranath Tagore in his centenary year. Of the 35 features in all, which ranged across subjects, 6 or about 17% were on painting from the Kangra Valley or the Punjab Hill States. J. C. French wrote 4 and M. S. Randhawa, 2. These are not large quantities, until compared with the single article in the whole of the same period on South Indian painting for example. The extent to which Pahari art was emerging as more visible than other forms of Indian art, then becomes clear.

Roopa Lekha was the journal of the All India Fine Arts and Crafts Society. The latter was established in 1928 to coordinate support for the arts across India and abroad — for instance, it organised loans of modern Indian painting to the Royal Academy exhibition.[67] It was the prominent agency in the field before the Government of independent India established the Lalit Kala, Sangeet Natak and Sahitya Akademis for Art, Performance and Literature respectively.[68] Afterward, the Society continued to work as a nodal agency that coordinated exhibitions of Indian and international art.

Roopa Lekha had a staid layout until the 1950s, going from single-colour covers with contrast lettering on thick art paper, to colour photographs of featured artworks on the cover, and glossy art paper used throughout. M. S. Randhawa had been associated with the AIFACS since 1947, when he was elected Chairman.[69] He joined the editorial

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[66] *Art and Letters,* 25:1 (1951). William Rothenstein was an artist and one of the founders of the India Society.
[67] 'Preliminary List of Proposed Exhibits', 33/4, Royal Academy Archive.
[68] It was not the only one, however, and its position was contested. 'Promotion of Art: Official Scheme Analysed "To the Editor of the Times of India"', *The Times of India*, 17 August 1948 (ProQuest Historical Newspapers, accessed 22 May 2017).
[69] B. P. Pal, 'Association of Dr M. S. Randhawa with the All Indian Fine Arts and Crafts Society', *Roopa Lekha,* 38:1&2 (1969), p. 10.

board in 1955 (on his return to Delhi), rising to become Chief Editor and Acting President of the Society between 1958-1959,[70] and President in 1960. Improving production standards was one of his goals. His success was recognised with 'two first prizes for excellence of printing and design in a competition held by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in 1961 and 1963'.[71] *Roopa Lekha* was 'undoubtedly the best art journal in the country'; a platform for art scholars to publish original research,[72] and a source of information on art-related activities through its 'Art Chronicle', which listed exhibitions, lectures, or conferences.

Between 1948-1952, 2 articles on Pahari paintings or artists appeared. Randhawa contributed his first article in 1953. After he joined the editorial board in 1955, almost *every single issue* in the thirty-two years between 1956 and 1988 carried one or more articles about Pahari/ Kangra painting, historic Sikh art (which Randhawa emphasised was the successor to Pahari art[73]) or modern Sikh artists; in addition to book reviews and advertisements. The 1969 issue was a presentation volume dedicated to M. S. Randhawa and carried six essays on Pahari art and one on Pahari jewellery, only outnumbered by the personal tributes from friends and colleagues. The 1979-1980 volume was a tribute to Archer and likewise carried three articles related to Pahari art interspersed with tributes and reminiscences.[74]

Roopa Lekha aimed to publish two issues every year, despite the challenges of paper shortage or printing press strikes. This meant that two issues for a calendar year were often printed as a single volume. To further complicate matters, volumes are not always consistently dated by year of publication; some years have consolidated issues (e.g. Volume 50 for 1978-1979); there were years when there was no publication; and a full reference set was not available for consultation even at the Society's own library. In spite of these caveats, it is possible to see a pattern of consistent promotion and visibility for Pahari painting, originating with Randhawa.

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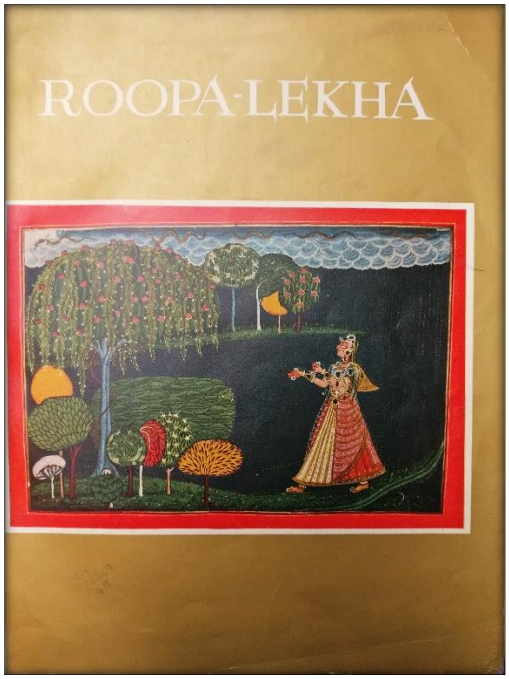
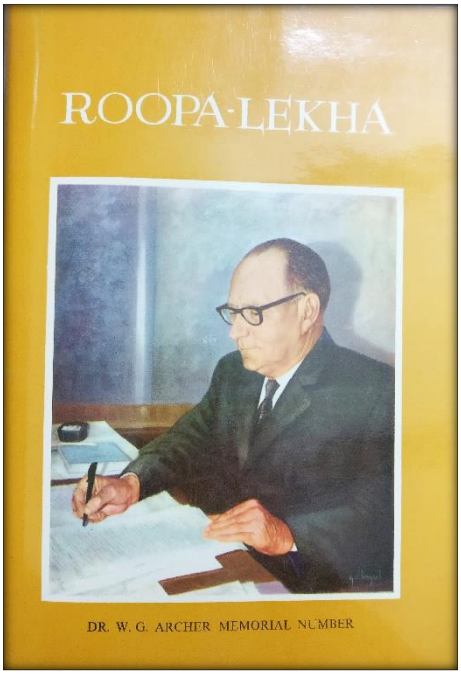
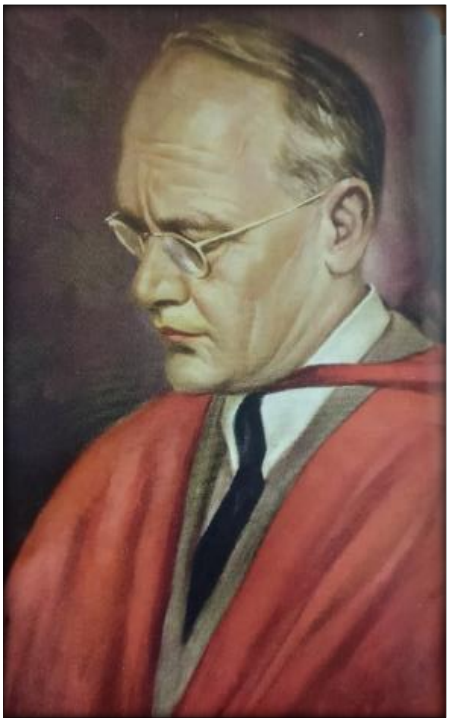
[70] M. S. Randhawa to W. G. Archer, 4 July 1958, Archer Papers, Mss Eur F236/301.
[71] B. P. Pal, 'Association of Dr M. S. Randhawa', p. 12.
[72] *Ibid.*
[73] M. S. Randhawa, 'Sikh Painting', *Roopa Lekha* 39:1&2 (1970), p. 21.
[74] Archer died in 1979, having overdosed on sleeping pills.





Figs 6.12 & 6.13: (left) Cover with a Basohli painting; and (right) W. G. Archer commemoration volume.[75]

[75] Images: Author. Courtesy the AIFACS Library.



Figs 6.14 & 6.15: (above) Portrait of Dr M. S. Randhawa published in the felicitation volume on his sixtieth birthday; (below) a meeting of the editorial board pictured in the same volume. L-R Mr. R. J. Bhattacharjee (layout artist), Dr B. N. Goswamy (Editor), B. K. Bhowmick (Secretary of the AIFACS) and Dr M. S. Randhawa.[76]

[76] Images: *Roopa Lekha,* 38:1&2 (1969), pp. 8, 13. Courtesy the AIFACS Library.

One of Randhawa's first acts after becoming Chief Editor was to recruit prominent art historians as Contributing Editors, including W. G. Archer, Mulk Raj Anand (who established and edited *Marg*), Hermann Goetz (who was back in Germany by then), and later, B. N. Goswamy.[77] Archer responded with 'delight' at the prospect of being associated with one of Randhawa's 'ventures'.[78] Their extensive correspondence shows that Randhawa was the chief orchestrator of this 'campaign' in collaboration with Archer.[79]

They had a small but influential network of fellow art historians (entirely male but for Mildred Archer, in the 50s and 60s[80]). Others included Karl Khandalavala who was the bi-annual *Lalit Kala*'s first co-editor (along with Pramod Chandra of the Prince of Wales Museum Bombay as it was then known, now the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalay) and art advisor to *Marg*, soon joined by B. N. Goswamy, and later, F. S. Aijazuddin. Aijazuddin's important publications on the Lahore Museum's Pahari and Sikh collections appeared in the 1970s, despite his having laboured over them for most of the preceding decade. Although a part of their network, his friendship with Archer and Randhawa grew towards end of the period this thesis focuses on, which explains his fleeting appearance here. However, the information and assistance he provided over the years were essential for Archer to realise his magnum opus, *Indian Paintings from the Punjab Hills* (published in 1973), as well as other projects.[81]

Despite their sometimes-tempestuous personal relationships, this network established a continuous discourse about Pahari painting, both on its own and as an

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[77] *Roopa Lekha*, 31:1 (1960).
[78] W. G. Archer to M. S. Randhawa, 15 September 1957, Archer Papers, Mss Eur F236/301.
[79] Archer Papers, Mss Eur F236.
[80] The gendered nature of museum work, and the museum space is little explored, but lies outside the scope of this thesis. For insights into the equation between gender and notions of order and disorder in the context of the exhibitions and display, see Jung H. Kim, 'Rethinking Vivekananda Through Space and Territorialised Spirituality, 1880-1920', unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Cambridge (2018). Abigail McGowan's preliminary thoughts on women and crafts in independent India are also pertinent here. 'Mothers, Godmothers, and Czarinas of Crafts: Women and the Imagination of India as a Crafts Nation, 1947-1962', paper presented at the seminar 'Women, Nation-Building and Feminism in India', University of Cambridge, 6 September 2018. I am grateful to Prof McGowan for sharing the text of the paper for my reference.
[81] F. S. Aijazuddin, *The Fickle 70s*: *Memoirs, 1972-1979* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 2016), p. 53, but also evident from their correspondence, see Archer Papers, Mss Eur F236.

aspect of Sikh and Punjabi cultural heritage. Such a prominent place in the nascent aesthetic discourse about Indian art helped catapult Pahari painting not only to the top of the heap within Rajput painting, but overall, as a shining example of the best of Indian art. Because they talked about it all the time, it became seen as the thing most *worth* talking about.

This is remarkable, since 'its final, late nineteenth-century production' was still recent, and its greatest achievements, within living memory[82] (for Randhawa and Archer). Maharaja Sansar Chand of Kangra, who is celebrated as an inspired patron, lived from c. 1765-1823, and his brilliant artist Nainsukh, from 1710-1778. A single painting by Nainsukh commanded over two million US dollars at auction in 2008, setting a record price for an Indian work of art, even taking contemporary works into account.[83] Nainsukh's descendants survived till 1950 or 1960, to sell the family heirlooms to M. S. Randhawa for the Chandigarh Museum. The rise of Pahari painting is therefore exceptional on two counts: it happened despite it being *both* a relative newcomer to the field, and of late, rather than ancient pedigree.

At first glance, *Marg* appears to tell a different story. Founded in 1946 by the novelist and writer Mulk Raj Anand and funded by the Tata group,[84] *Marg* set the standard for art publishing in India for decades, through Anand's editorial and design partnership with Dolly Sahiar.[85] Devika Singh has convincingly shown that from its foundation until the mid-1950s, *Marg* pursued an 'anti-revivalist and cosmopolitan' publications and editorial policy that 'favoured a return to the spirit of India's prestigious artistic past, but not to its form'.[86] She argues that the art of the Mughals in general and the syncretic Akbari period in particular, were held up as *the* conceptual example to emulate, whether in modern Indian art and architecture, or the wider national arena.

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[82] Terence McInerny, 'On Collecting Indian Miniature Paintings', p. 3.
[83] Pratapaditya Pal, 'Collecting Art in British India' in *A Passionate Eye* ed. by Giles Tillotson, p. 16.
[84] Sound financial backing, as Orsini notes, is a crucial requirement for the success of a journal, and the continuous backing of the Tata group helps to explain *Marg*'s longevity where others have faltered. Francesca Orsini, *Hindi Public Sphere*, p. 58.
[85] Annapurna Garimella (ed.), *Mulk Raj Anand: Shaping the Indian Modern* (Mumbai: Marg Foundation, 2005).
[86] Devika Singh, 'Approaching the Mughal Past', p. 202.

Annapurna Garimella and Kavita Singh cite Anand's support and coverage of regional heritage against the backdrop of states reorganisation (when national disintegration was a worry), and his idea that national museums should be ranged across the country (rather than centralised in or from New Delhi) as evidence for his commitment to India's diversity and plurality.[87] However, while tracking Anand's evolving ideas about the role of art in national life and India's cultural contributions to the world, Garimella acknowledges that albeit 'impassioned by idealism and fired by injustice', and more inclusive than most, 'Anand often did not set new terms for writing India's history'.[88]

Part of this could have been because 'he saw [the value of] his work and the work of heritage [as being] elsewhere',[89] but surely, his own position as a 'Punjabi intellectual and an Indian nationalist'[90] was an influential factor, just as it was with Randhawa. Anand was a refugee. For him, Punjab needed rehabilitation in the eyes of its own people, as much as those of the world. So, despite Anand's pan-Indian vision and credentials, I suggest that his own background made him receptive to furthering art with a Punjab provenance as the height of Indian artistic achievement, even if that was never a stated goal.

Nehru's death in 1964 has often been characterised as a watershed, in *Marg's* case, marking 'the end of the optimistic period' for the journal in addition to the 'continued imbalance between present [artistic] production and past glory'.[91] This is not quite accurate. Communal politics, party feuds, and the redeployment of cultural symbols was not *more* characteristic of the post-Nehruvian period. Historians working in a range of fields such as partition, governance, state formation, political history, and language politics have shown that there was never in fact a Nehruvian lull. Indeed, the optimism, sense of experimentation and intellectual openness that Devika Singh and others have indicated are the more remarkable for having occurred *despite* challenges to the

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87 Kavita Singh, 'Museums and Monuments', pp.74-87; Annapurna Garimella, 'On Inheriting the Past', pp. 88-105, in *Mulk Raj Anand* ed. by Annapurna Garimella.
88 Annapurna Garimella, 'On Inheriting the Past', p. 99.
89 *Ibid.*
90 *Ibid.*
91 Devika Singh, 'Approaching the Mughal Past', p. 202.

Nehruvian 'consensus', rather than due to their absence. And as this thesis shows, cultural symbols were actively deployed and contested from the very inception of independence. There is no doubt that Nehru's secular vision (which embraced the syncretic elements of the subcontinent's Mughal past) had a powerful appeal; and that the *Marg* team subscribed to it.[92] But while, in consequence, Mughal art was a frequent feature, it was not the only kind of painting that achieved prominence.

It is time to re-evaluate how Pahari painting was placed in *Marg*.

Pahari painting made its appearance in *Marg's* very first volume and issue. In it, Karl Khandalavala discussed fine paintings in a private collection, and issued appeals to acquire such collections in the interests of the nation.[93] There were 26 further articles from then until 1977, at which point there was a break until 1992. The total number of features on Pahari painting in 71 years of *Marg* is roughly 46. In percentage terms, this translates to about 83% in the 31 years between 1946 and 1977, and overall, about 64% until 2017. *Marg* appeared (and still does) in four volumes each year, so these figures would drop if calculated against the total number of articles in the 284 issues published until 2017.

My aim in hazarding these estimates is to gauge a sense of how visible Pahari painting in its various guises became (i.e. Kangra painting, the art of the Punjab Hills or the Himachal courts, and stretching to cover painting under the Sikhs), compared to other forms of Indian art, in a single journal over time. Given the range and variety of Indian art and juxtaposed against the size of its geographical region of origin, I argue that visibility for paintings from the Punjab Hills (later Himachal Pradesh) was disproportionate in a magazine purported to be about the arts of India as a whole.

From the mid-1950s, *Marg* anchored each issue to a theme more and more often.[94] So for instance, Vol 15, No. 1 was dedicated to Chandigarh when the first phase of the city was completed in 1961. The theme of Vol 10, No. 2 in 1957 was Punjab (after the merger with PEPSU in 1956). Vol 17, No. 3 in 1964 was *entirely* dedicated to Pahari wall

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92 *Ibid.*, pp. 189-190.
93 Karl Khandalavala, 'Some Paintings from the Collection of the Late Burjor N. Treasuryvala', *Marg,* 1:1 (1946), pp. 46-57.
94 Devika Singh, 'Approaching the Mughal Past', p. 201.

painting; and Vol 21, No. 4 in 1968 to Pahari painting. In a similar vein, Vol 23, No. 2 in 1970 featured Himachal Pradesh's heritage, just before it was officially constituted as a State in 1971 (it had been a Union Territory until then). It discussed architecture and sculpture, wall paintings, wood carving, arts, and crafts. The absence of painting from the former Rajput courts of Himachal Pradesh is glaring, and would be difficult to explain but for the fact that by 1970, they had, instead, become almost exclusively associated with Punjab. *Marg* was not only reflecting this fact, but had played a part in constructing this association.

Marg too, perpetuated the notion that Pahari painting was Indian art's last 'great' gasp, before the sweeping changes wrought by the colonial experience and then independence, and on par with the great Mughal corpus. A case in point is one of *Marg*'s twenty-fifth anniversary issues on an 'Appreciation of Indian Art'.[95] In addition to discussing the place of art in civilisation, it surveyed the nation's painterly riches: 'Paintings of the Age of the Gods' (meaning pre-Muslim, for example, Ajanta), 'Sultanate', 'Mughal', 'Rajasthani', 'Pahari', and 'Contemporary'. Not only was this a limited geographical and temporal vision of India, but it demonstrates how the arts of the north-western corner of the subcontinent were made prominent on a pan-India stage.

M. S. Randhawa and W. G. Archer wrote about a quarter of the relevant essays (6 out of 26), with Mulk Raj Anand (the Founder Editor), Karl Khandalavala, B. N. Goswamy and others (including one by F. S. Aijazuddin) making up the rest.[96] Whichever way his evolving politics pushed Anand's editorials, these other authors — actors in a shared network — shaped *Marg*'s content, just as they did *Roopa Lekha*'s and, to a lesser extent, *Art and Letters* (which stopped publishing after 1963). One way was through written contributions with genuine scholarly value. But another was because editorial choices about content (Anand's for *Marg* or Randhawa's for *Roopa Lekha)* were, in part,

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[95] *Marg*, 25:4 (1972).

[96] The estimates are based on a search of the *Marg* archive online [http://www.Marg-art.org//archives, accessed 1 October 2017] using the keywords 'pahari' and 'kangra', and author searches using 'Archer' and 'Randhawa'. I have included only articles dealing specifically with the art history of Pahari paintings in my count, rather than, say, modern art inspired by it. This is by no means a definitive exercise; rather, it is a tool to discern larger patterns.

an outcome of the network *itself* — those 'endless…complicated, fluctuating circulations of people and things',[97] *and* ideas.

Consider, for example, that Archer and Randhawa had been Anand's mentors on Indian art in general and Pahari painting in particular; Anand described himself to Archer as Randhawa's student.[98] Anand had travelled with both men to the Kangra Valley in 1954 and 1960, in search of paintings and their 'pure' landscapes. Randhawa supported Anand's appointment as the first Tagore Professor of Literature and Fine Art at Panjab University, at which time Anand established the Department of Art History and Visual Arts in 1962.[99] In 1974, Archer reported to Aijazuddin that 'Dr Mulk Raj Anand is proposing to bring out an issue…devoted entirely to my Pahari book',[100] and on seeing the finished product in 1975, Randhawa wrote to Archer saying he was 'touched by the tribute which Mulk Raj has paid to your great work.'[101] This particular network around Pahari painting, and its collaborative, symbiotic flows of knowledge and expertise, stabilised certain visions of Punjab in India. They did this for *both* domestic and international audiences through their publications.[102]

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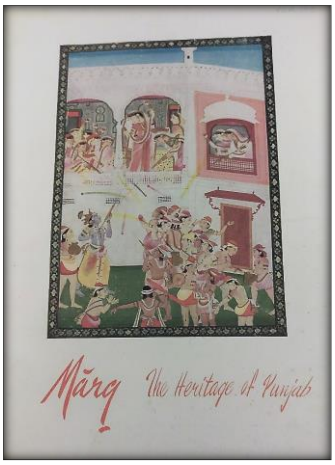
[97] Frances Larson, Alison Petch, David Zeitlyn, 'Social Networks and the Creation of the Pitt Rivers Museum', *Journal of Material Culture,* 12:3 (2007), p. 217.
[98] Mulk Raj Anand to W. G. Archer, 15 October 1973, Archer Papers, Mss Eur F236/304.
[99] 'About Department of Art History and Visual Arts, Panjab University', Panjab University Website [http://ahva.puchd.ac.in/, accessed 11 May 2020].
[100] W. G. Archer to F. S. Aijazuddin, 11 July 1974, Archer Papers, Mss Eur F236/304.
[101] M. S. Randhawa to W. G. Archer, 4 August 1975, Archer Papers, Mss Eur F236/304.
[102] And even through radio. Although outside the scope of this thesis, I have found evidence of at least four interviews with Randhawa aired on All India Radio on Indian painting, the Kangra 'kalam', the folk songs of Kangra, and Kangra painting, respectively. 'Day's Highlights', *The Times of India,* 20 September 1961, 13 October 1965, 6 October 1966, and 20 October 1966 (ProQuest Historical Newspapers, accessed 22 May 2017).

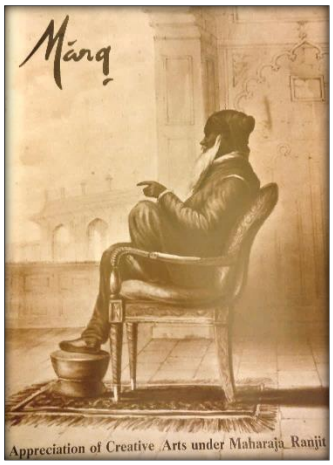
Fig 6.16: M. S. Randhawa, W. G. Archer, and Mulk Raj Anand on travels together in the Kangra Valley in search of paintings in 1954.[103]

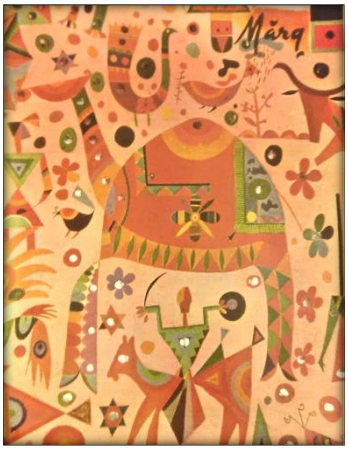
Following page:
Figs 6.17a-f: Assorted covers of Marg, dedicated to the arts or culture of Punjab. This is not the complete list of covers, but it is evident that Punjab received high visibility.[104]

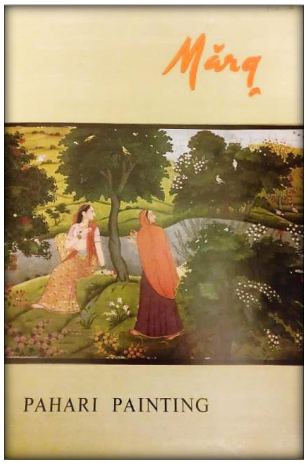
[103] Image: *Roopa Lekha*, 38:1& 2 (1969), p. 49. Courtesy the AIFACS Library.
[104] Images: Author. Courtesy the Ancient India and Iran Trust.

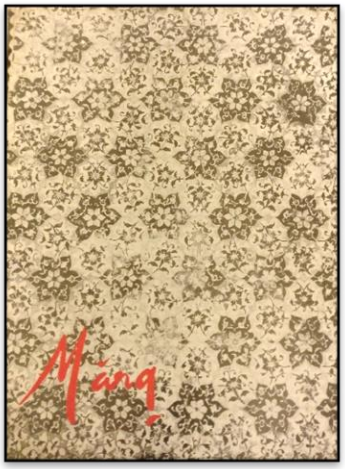

MARG

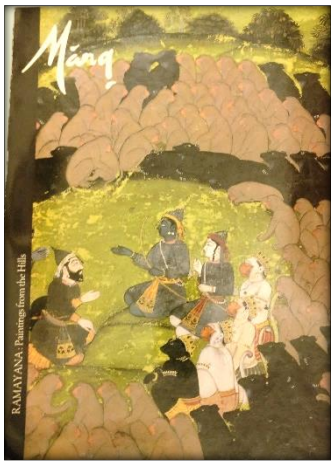

Marg
The Heritage of Punjab

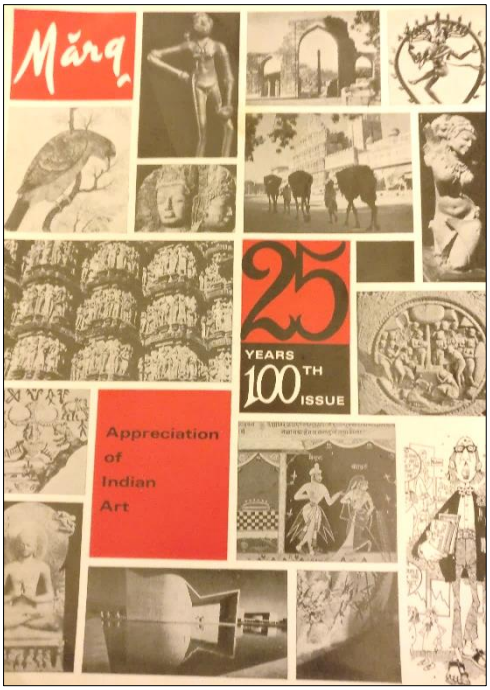

Marg
Appreciation of Creative Arts under Maharaja Ranjit

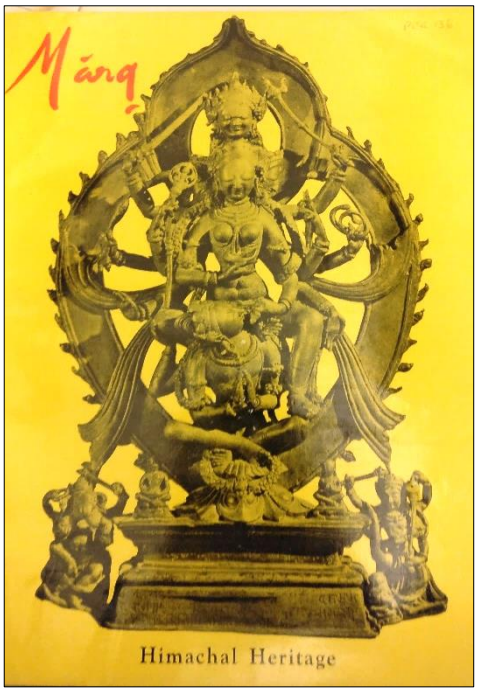

Marg


Marg
PAHARI PAINTING


Marg


Marg
RAMAYANA Paintings from the Hills





Figs 6.18 & 6.19: (above) 25th anniversary edition cover; (below) the cover of the Himachal Heritage volume. Notice what is <u>not</u> on the Himachal cover.[105]

[105] Images: Author. Courtesy the Ancient India and Iran Trust.

A review of approximately forty titles on Indian art published between 1945 and 1985 supplements this review,[106] and supports the thesis that Pahari painting gained disproportionate visibility through Randhawa and Archer's aesthetic focus on it, as a result of which it gained beacon-like status in the art historical canon. Whether surveys of Indian painting, more wide-ranging compendia of Indian art and architecture, or museum guidebooks highlighting gems in national collections, Pahari painting is the consistent and sole exception to a story of general decline. Leaving aside the continuing tendency of historians of Indian art to announce the demise of their subject with regularity (the cut-off dates vary),[107] it is almost as if Mughal art could *not* be the last word. Pahari painting is presented as a brief and brilliant moment in the eighteenth century, after the Mughal empire weakened following Aurangzeb's death. Thereafter, it would appear that nothing of note was produced, until the British and nationalist-sponsored revivals of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In some cases, the Mughals and other Muslim dynasties are skipped altogether.[108]

Aside from any anti-Muslim bias (of which both Indian and foreign writers could be guilty), did specific visions of the nation, and a desire for a sufficiently differentiated identity play a part? For Mughal art and culture were a large part of the Islamic heritage that India and Pakistan shared; and the irony of a partition which left most of the material evidence of it in India has been noted.[109] Celebrating Pahari painting as the later, more luminescent jewel in the crown allowed India to have a unique artistic identity, even if the physical objects were scattered across institutions, including a few around the world. In point of fact, their acquisition by international museums offered opportunities to promote a Hindu vision of India, tied to a Hindu artistic legacy. There may not have been an explicit communal agenda, but being rooted in Rajput Hindu courts (most of

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106 See Appendix I and II.

107 Giles Tillotson, 'Book Review of *Forgotten Masters: Indian Painting for the East India Company* ed by William Dalrymple (London: The Wallace Collection, 2019)', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (2020), p. 3 [https://doi.org/10.1017/S1356186320000383]. For another example, see the lengthening chronology for Indian art between Benjamin Rowland, *The Art and Architecture of India: Buddhist — Hindu — Jain,* Penguin Books, 1953, and its later editions.

108 Again, see Benjamin Rowland, *The Art and Architecture of India.*

109 Nayanjot Lahiri, *Monuments Matter: India's Archaeological Heritage Since Independence* (Mumbai: Marg Foundation, 2017). Also see Ananya Jahanara Kabir, citing Mortimer Wheeler, in *Partition's Post-Amnesias* (New Delhi: Women Unlimited, 2013), p. 100.

whom had become a part of independent India), Pahari painting nevertheless caters to one.[110] So, the onus is on curators and custodians of art to reflect on the histories and worldviews that their collections *could* prompt and the impression they give, besides the storylines they themselves may conceive of, propagate, and share.

Inspiration for Modern and Popular Art

'Modernity', or the condition of being 'modern' is defined as what is 'current' or 'contemporary',[111] often accompanied by the notion of newness or change. Deemed 'static' and 'unchanging' over centuries of colonial rule, Asians claimed their right to modernity with alacrity. It was 'a particular approach to the world embodied in an epistemology of progress, a faith in universals, the primacy of the subject, and a turning away from religion towards reason',[112] often conceptualised as a straightforward opposition to all that was traditional.[113] Scholars have noted the contradiction in the terms of reference — that for Nehru and his contemporaries, European modernity was a destination India had been prevented from reaching as a result of colonialism, rather than an 'Indian' modernity being the goal.[114] So overpowering was this Eurocentric vision that it is only more recently that alternative sources and South Asian variants of

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[110] It is not only paintings. Archaeological collections too have been used to support a Hindu prehistoric identity for India. The lack of dissection and reflection in the Indian museum, and archaeological professions is a serious issue. See Sudeshna Guha, 'Heritage and the Curation of the Archaeological Scholarship of India' in V. Selvakumar, S. Hemanth and S. K. Aruni (eds.), *South Asian Archaeology — from the Palaeolithic to the Present: Essays in Honour of Prof K. Paddayya* (forthcoming).

[111] 'Modern', *Oxford English Dictionary* [https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/modern, accessed 2 October 2019].

[112] Rebecca M. Brown, *Art for a Modern India, 1947-1980* (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 2009), p. 4.

[113] Sudipta Kaviraj, *The Imaginary Institution of India* (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2010), p.122.

[114] *Ibid.*

modernity have begun to be explored, along with the recognition that the colony and the non-West shaped modernity as much as the metropole and the West.[115]

And yet, what would give modernity in art a distinctive 'Indian' flavour? What would prevent it from being dismissed as 'derivative'? Eager to establish their own niche and mark their arrival on a global stage, Indian artists and connoisseurs struggled with this question — how should they paint? Should they make it a point to eschew European artistic styles or conventions? Was it possible to do that, given the close contacts between India and Europe, and the mutual exposure to one another's art? Should sub-continental painterly conventions, such as the miniature, limit artistic boundaries? How to answer the charge that Indian art could never be 'modern'? What about subject matter? Was the answer to paint in whichever style one preferred but reimagine older themes or subjects? These questions continue to be pertinent.[116]

Although the search for an 'authentic Indian' expression in art may remain an eternal quest, the discussion was fraught and feverish for some decades after independence. In an imaginary dialogue with Socrates, the artist K. G. Subramanyan (1924-2016) conveys the dilemma he and his contemporaries faced over how to relate to, or incorporate past artistic legacies and yet be modern. It could be 'a kind of purism that constrains', given that the past was,

> 'still visible in its vestiges thrown over the landscape or tucked up in its museums. Tremendous things…but deadly of sorts, if you are not on your guard; they could dazzle you and strike you blind to things around you... the wonder that was India and all that. Throwing art critics into frenzy and holding artists in thrall. A sense of history is part of civilisation…but you should put your history where it belongs. Behind you if you like it to give you the background, beneath you if you wanted to

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[115] Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincialising Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Manu B. Bhagavan, *Sovereign Spheres: Princes, Education, and Empire in Colonial India* (Delhi; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Rebecca M. Brown, *Art for a Modern India*; Sheldon Pollock (ed.), *Forms of Knowledge in Early Modern Asia: Explorations in the Intellectual History of India and Tibet, 1500-1800* (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 2011); Janaki Nair, *Mysore Modern: Rethinking the Region under Princely Rule* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2011); Eric L. Beverley, *Hyderabad, British India, and the World: Muslim Networks and Minor Sovereignty, c. 1850-1950* (Delhi; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

[116] Rebecca M. Brown, *Art for a Modern India*, Susan S. Bean (ed.), *Midnight to the Boom: Painting in India after Independence* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2013); Giles Tillotson, *Primitivism and Modern Indian Art* (New Delhi: Delhi Art Gallery, 2019). Also see Geeta Kapur, *When was Modernism?* (New Delhi: Tulika, 2000); she asked similar questions in her earlier essays in *Vrischik*.

give you added height. But those that carry it on their heads like antediluvian smog, choking them up, forcing them to go round and round…are pitiable.'[117]

Subramanyan was 'not too bothered', considering himself at the other, modern end of the stream, happy if 'its push' came through him without 'going into convulsions about it'; if not, he 'wouldn't grumble', and might thereby even add 'a new band to its spectrum'.[118] The past could be both burden and inspiration; its 'transformation in modern art…a process marked by trial and error, creating multiple pathways to being an Indian artist and world citizen'.[119]

Randhawa and Archer also shared an interest in modern Indian art. They collaborated in promoting this too — Archer through his writing,[120] Randhawa through the occasional written piece but with greater effect as a patron, in his capacity as President of the AIFACS, and chief mover behind the Chandigarh Museum. As a senior bureaucrat, Randhawa was able to give artists public commissions,[121] and on several occasions, Archer drew his attention to promising painters, especially if they had a Punjab connection. For instance, in 1962 Archer recommended Avinash Chandra, who had 'recently become very important over here as a contemporary Indian painter. Some of his works are in the National Gallery Modern Art, New Delhi.' As Chandra was from Delhi and Simla, Archer considered him 'really' a Punjabi, and thought it 'very important that the Punjab Museum should obtain some examples of his work' as it would 'redound to [its] general prestige'. He offered to select a few to recommend for acquisition and urged Randhawa to verify his own 'high opinion' with Mulk Raj Anand.[122]

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117 K. G. Subramanyan, 'Artists on Art', *Vrischik,* 4:3 (1971), pp. 4-5. From Asia Art Archive [https://aaa.ork.hk, accessed 29 July 2019].
118 *Ibid.*
119 Sonal Khullar, 'National Tradition and Modernist Art' *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Indian Culture* ed. by Vasudha Dalmia and Rashmi Sadana (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 181. Also see Sonal Khullar, *Worldly Affiliations: Artistic Practice, National Identity, and Modernism in India, 1930-1990* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015).
120 W. G. Archer, *India and Modern Art* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1959).
121 For instance, at the Anglo-Sikh War Memorial at Ferozeshah (Ferozepur district), inaugurated in 1976 and which I visited in March 2018. He corresponded with Archer about the contents and commissioned the artist Kirpal Singh to paint the pictures that still hang there today. Archer Papers, MSS Eur F236/304.
122 W. G. Archer to M. S. Randhawa, 26 March 1962, Archer Papers, Mss Eur F236/301.

Fig 6.20: The entrance to the War Memorial at Ferozepur. The Chandigarh Museum 'style' of architecture is noteworthy [123]

[123] Image: Author.

Fig 6.21: The memorial contains 'history paintings' with portraits of the key players involved in the four Anglo-Sikh wars of Mudki, Ferozeshah, Sabraon, and Chillianwalla, as well as 'depicting' the key events. Some portraits were based on photographs, which Randhawa requested from Archer. Randhawa commissioned the artist Kripal Singh to paint these works.[124]

[124] Image: Author.

Gulammohamed Sheikh worried well into the 1970s that while the meaning and goal of "Indianism" in modern art was no clearer, mere tokenism — the borrowing of motifs from traditional art with contemporary trends to create an unconvincing 'Indian modern' — was rife. Worse, he thought that modern attempts were less successful than earlier aesthetic syntheses such as Gandhara (Indian and Greek), Mughal (Islamic and Hindu) and 'Kangra' (Mughal and Rajput) art.[125] Others , such as M. F. Husain, did not regard modernism as an intellectual exercise requiring quite so much effort at articulation. Husain declared that he had given up words. Instead, he said he responded visually, inspired by the forms and shapes of Gupta sculpture in the 'Masterpieces' exhibition at the Rashtrapati Bhavan to create a new vocabulary, which his colleagues marked.[126] At Cholamandalam near Madras (Chennai) where artists chose to work as a community, they rejected the 'sensational philosophy of art' of the Bombay-based progressive artists' school, choosing instead a 'depersonalised', 'ritualistic identification' with art, which they posited was the 'authentic' Indian approach to take.[127]

An artist might find stimulation anywhere, but without underplaying the disparate sources of inspiration for 'modern' Indian art, it is striking that Sheikh perceived Kangra — or Pahari — art not only as a potential source, but an 'ideal' one. It suggests that the Archer-Randhawa network's interpretations had struck a chord outside the small circle of art historians, securing a place for Pahari painting by the 1970s among practicing artists.

Sobha Singh (1909-1986) was a well-known Punjabi painter of popular art whose work offers another angle from which to explore this trend.[128] Born on what would become the Indian side of the Punjab border, he was in Lahore at the time of partition. He then moved to the tiny village of Andretta, near Palampur, in the Kangra Valley, where he built a home and established a studio. M. S. Randhawa first met Singh whilst he was still a student at Government College Lahore.[129] He remained a prominent patron

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125 G M Sheikh, 'Tradition and Modernity', *Vrischik,* 4:4 (1973), p. 10.
126 Giles Tillotson, *Primitivism*, p. 56.
127 Josef James, 'Introduction' in *Cholamandal: An Artists' Village* ed. by Josef James (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 17-22.
128 Although not often included in the 'canon' of modern Indian artists, he is celebrated as such in the region and was also honoured with a Padma Shri by the Government of India.
129 M. S. Randhawa, *Aap Beeti* (New Delhi: Navyug Publishers, 2014 reprint), p. 88.

and influence — Randhawa's bust still stands in Singh's workspace, and photographs of them together show him peering at an artwork Singh is working on.[130] Sobha Singh became best known for his renderings of popular Punjabi subjects such as 'portraits' of the Sikh gurus and events from their lives; depictions from Punjabi folktales like *Heer Ranjha* and *Sohni Mahiwal*, and the women of Punjab. But his range also encompassed Bhagat Singh, the Hindu gods Rama and Krishna, and even M. S. Randhawa.

Sobha Singh's images representing Punjab through its 'types' of women (such as 'Her Grace the Gaddan', 'The Punjabi Bride' and 'The Kangra bride') were embedded in his friendship with Randhawa. Randhawa admired his paintings of Punjabi beauties when they first met in Lahore,[131] considering them to have 'a special place in Indian art'.[132] When Randhawa first visited the Kangra Valley, it was Sobha Singh who pointed him to a cache of Pahari paintings, suggesting his familiarity with this body of work. For his part, Randhawa extolled the feminine charms and romantic beauty of 'Kangra paintings', and Kangra people. For him, the sturdy, charismatic Gaddis, a nomadic pastoral community of the Himachal ranges and Kangra Valley, were, in fact, the 'original' 'pure' Punjabis.[133] Every time he told the story of Maharaja Sansar Chand in print (which was often), he remembered to inform his readers that he had had a Gaddi wife.

A host of scholars have demonstrated the critical and transformative role that popular, mass-produced images played in imagining not only the nation, but other identities.[134] There are 'subnational, transnational, regional, linguistic, sectarian, caste- and community-based' ones and the feminine has evolved to become the 'iconic', idealised embodiment of the full range.[135] In the absence of investigations of feminine

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130 Based on personal observation during a visit in May 2018. Photography was not permitted.
131 M. S. Randhawa, *Aap Beeti*, p. 88.
132 *Ibid.*, p. 253.
133 *Ibid.*, Chapter 50. Also discussed in Chapter V of this thesis.
134 Kajri Jain, 'More than Meets the Eye: The Circulation of Images and the Embodiment of Value', *Contributions to Indian Sociology,* 36:1&2 (2002), pp. 33-70. Although focussing on images of deities, the argument is premised on the fact of the circulation of popular images.
135 Kajri Jain, 'Mass Reproduction and the Art of the Bazaar' in *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Indian Culture* ed. by Vasudha Dalmia and Rashmi Sadana, p. 197; Sumathi Ramaswamy, *The Goddess and the Nation: Mapping Mother India* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010); Richard Davis (ed.), *Picturing the Nation: Iconographies of Modern India* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 2007); Tapati Guha-Thakurta, 'Women as "Calendar Art" Icons: Emergence of Pictorial Stereotype in

representations in Sikh visual culture, I adapt this scholarship (which focuses on the image of the Hindu woman) to suggest that something similar took place in the context of women of the hills epitomising Punjab. For example, Randhawa recalled the 'strong effect' the Kangra landscape had on him when he first visited in 1951, likening it to 'how Ranjha must have been affected when he first saw Heer',[136] fetishizing the Dhauladhar mountains and the Kangra Valley as feminine.

By writing in the same breath about the Gaddi women he saw, with the women in Pahari paintings, Sansar Chand's wife *and* Sobha Singh's beauties, Randhawa spun a web of connections linking elite art, popular art, and the daughters of the soil. At another level, his words lent weight to romantic and feminised images of Punjab, through the idealisation of Pahari painting. Randhawa's favourite quote was Coomaraswamy's 1916 characterisation of their magical world where,

> '…all men are heroic, all women are beautiful and passionate and shy, beasts both wild and tame are the friends of man, and trees and flowers are conscious of the foot-steps of the bridegroom as he passes by…visible to all who do not refuse to see with transfiguring eyes of love…'[137]

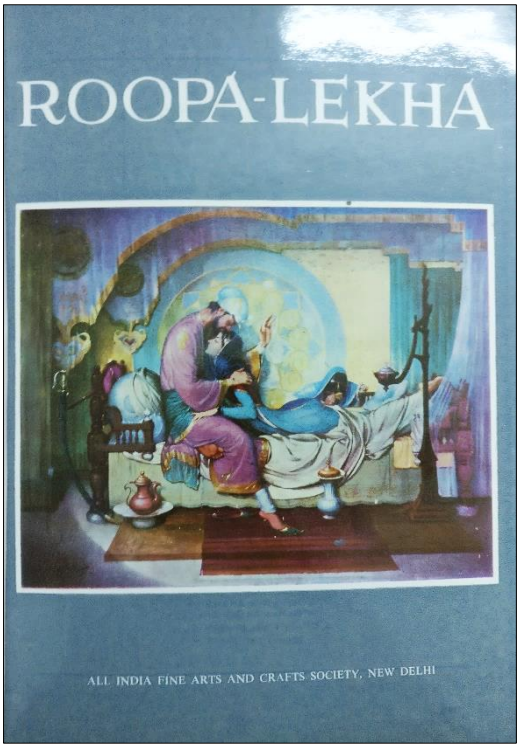
Romanticised and feminised depictions of Pahari painting (including the use of Coomaraswamy's words) persist. In a recent essay on a painterly family in Sansar Chand's employ, Harsha Dehejia reiterated the view that "The Kangra *kalam* is indeed a feminine art, intrinsically an art of sentiment rather than of passion."[138]

Colonial India', *Economic & Political Weekly,* 26:43 (1991), pp. 91-99; Patricia Uberoi, 'Feminine Identity and National Ethos in Indian Calendar Art', *Economic & Political Weekly,* 25:17 (1990), pp. 41-48.

[136] Heer-Ranjha is a popular Punjabi epic of tragic lovers. M. S. Randhawa, *Aap Beeti,* pp. 11, 13.

[137] Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy quoted in M. S. Randhawa, *Indian Paintings: Exploration, Research and Publications* (Chandigarh: Government Museum and Art Gallery, 1986), p. 10.

[138] Harsha V. Dehejia, '*Sabdaranjana:* The Painted Word' in *Indian Painting: Themes, Histories Interpretations. Essays in Honour of B. N. Goswamy* ed. by Mahesh Sharma and Padma Kaimal (Ahmedabad: Mapin Publishing/ Osianama, 2013), p. 311.



Figs 6.22 & 6.23: (above) Cover of Roopa Lekha issue featuring Sobha Singh's work, including an article on him by Randhawa; (below) screenshot from the Sobha Singh website run by his family, featuring his work.[139]

[139] Images: Author. (above) Courtesy the AIFACS Library; (below) Screenshot of website run by Sobha Singh's family, who manage the house and museum [http://sobhasinghartist.com/romantic-theme.html, accessed January 2020].

There is another possible interpretation of Sobha Singh's oeuvre, taking account of the fraught relationship between the hills and the plains, which is an established one. The protests that accompanied suggestions that the Hill States be merged with Punjab in the mid-twentieth century[140] were not the first. There had been earlier episodes of resistance in the wake of Sikh, and later British, hegemony over the Western Himalayas in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[141] So it is possible to read Punjabi Sikh artists representing Punjab through images of hill women, as a political and cultural claim, and thus part of a longer cycle of dominance and resistance. A feminized view could also be considered a counterpoint to a Sikh masculine ideal disseminated through visual culture and history-painting, which positioned the men of the community as martyrs, and the protective 'cloak of Hindustan'.[142]

A Network of Champions

M. S. Randhawa and W. G. Archer may not have set out with the explicit aim of re-arranging the established art historical canon, to place art from the western Himalayas at the apex of Indian art. But that is what they and their network accomplished in the space of three decades — between Archer's 1954 publication on *Painting from the Punjab Hills* until Randhawa's death in 1984, they launched a 'craze'[143] for Pahari painting.

Of course, this rise must be contextualised: the Indian artistic canon moved from prioritising sculpture to painting, within which the growing awareness of and interest in Rajput painting was an enabling factor.[144] At the moment when the need for exceptional art was keenest, their programme of writing promoted one category of painting, keeping it in the expert and public eye in India and abroad, complemented by their collecting

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140 V. P. Menon, *Integration of the Indian States* (London: Sangam, 1985), p. 490.
141 Mahesh Sharma, 'The Frayed Margins of Empire: Early Nineteenth Century Panjab and the Hill States', *The Indian Economic and Social History Review,* 54:4 (2017), p. 505.
142 Kanika Singh, 'Masculinity in Sikh Visual Culture: Representing the Guru and the Martyr', Tasveer Ghar [http://www.tasveergharindia.net/essay/masculine-sikh-guru-martyr.html, accessed July 2019].
143 Terence McInerny, 'On Collecting Indian Miniature Paintings', p. 8.
144 Kavita Singh, 'Museums'.

activities for the high-status museums they worked for. Being respected administrators lent additional authority to their opinions and placed them in positions of power that allowed them to define the nation even as they singled out the art treasures that would substantiate their definition. Through the museums that showcased and publications that championed them, Pahari painting came to occupy pride of place in the Indian art historical canon, despite contradicting an academic tradition weighted against painting, and chronologically newer and thus 'modern'[145] works of art.

When considering the relative obscurity, political irrelevance and physical remoteness of the states which produced these paintings, the outcome is astonishing. For we must recall that the eighteenth century (coeval with the Pahari masterpieces), was neither an artistic nor political vacuum. Even though it was once the academic fashion to consider it a period of decline, it has been recognised that the diminishing central power of the Mughals during this period offered an opportunity for others; that the twilight of one dynasty might provide the gleam of opportunity to another.

Randhawa and Archer were a double act, each with his own art historical perspective and core audience, though their views and approaches complemented one another. One of the strongest features of Archer's eloquent essays on Pahari painting is his analysis of its formal qualities — line and colour — in addition to his expostulations on its lyricism, and links to poetry. Contemporary aesthetic trends influenced him. Emphasising "'sensibility" to form' rather than 'erudition' or an understanding of context or narrative, as the key to appreciating art,[146] they enabled his 'receptiveness to art objects from non-Western traditions… African sculpture was as deserving of study as Greek sculpture, and…anyone could respond to the aesthetic appeal of ancient Chinese vases.'[147]

Therefore, because Archer responded to the formal qualities of painting, it meant that he could appreciate those qualities across an entire range of Indian painting — not

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145 Havell thought the Nainsukh painting he acquired was 'modern'. Terence McInerny, 'On Collecting Indian Miniature Paintings', p. 2.
146 Kavita Singh, 'Museums', p. 351. Also see Giles Tillotson (ed.), *A Passionate Eye.*
147 Anne-Pascale Bruneau, 'Fry, Roger Eliot', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* [www.oxforddnb.com, accessed July 2019]. For a fuller account of aesthetic theory and its relevance to modern Indian art, see Giles Tillotson, *Primitivism.*

just refined works from the Pahari or Mughal schools, but also those outliers dismissed for being crude, even if vibrant, such as Basohli.

> 'Through his evocative words, he forced readers to experience an aesthesis; through his exhaustive scholarship he gave the field solidity and weight. While Archer's theories about this or that Pahari school of painting might be rejected, what remains is the fact that he expanded the terrain of Indian art to include a whole universe of painting that had lain outside the pale.'[148]

Although Archer's 'modernist' style of engagement, 'ambition to chart a definitive history' and 'shaky' sources of information have later been characterised as 'distrusted',[149] this chapter expands on Kavita Singh's insights above by demonstrating that the real value of his contribution in terms of outcome, was what his *network* achieved *in collaboration*.

Archer's interests ranged from 'folk' genres like Kalighat painting to modern Indian art, a term loosely applied to art produced in India from the late nineteenth century until the decades after independence, and beyond. Archer's scholarship spilled over from art history to the (then) contemporary, and the common language of appreciating art's formal aesthetic qualities was a powerful bridge between the two. At a time when eighteenth century art was still seen as a 'relic' of past glories, Archer wrote about both historic and modern Indian painting using the same language — that of formalism, analysing shape, colour, and composition. He thus linked the two, and through his writing on modern Indian art, linked India to the world — at least for the alert reader. For, he tapped into a global vocabulary for writing on art, making it possible for those who understood, say, Picasso or Matisse, to discover that they could understand 'exotic' Indian painting after all.

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148 Kavita Singh, 'Museums', p. 351.

149 Vidya Shivadas, 'Mapping the Field of Indian Art Criticism: Post-Independence', Asia Art Archive, 2011 [https://aaa.org.hk/en/resources/papers-presentations/mapping-the-field-of-indian-art-criticism-post-independence, accessed 29 July 2019]. She cites B. N. Goswamy's later formulation of the family as the basis of style as an example of Archer's problematic, if pioneering work. See B. N. Goswamy, 'Pahari Painting: The Family as the Basis of Style', *Marg,* 21:4 (1968), pp. 17-62. However, she does not mention, or is unaware that Randhawa and Archer laid the groundwork by recording artist family lineages.

Fig 6.24: Radha and Krishna, Basohli, made c. 1730-1735, attributed to Manaku, brother of Nainsukh.[150]

[150] Image: © Victoria & Albert Museum, Museum number IM.88-1930.

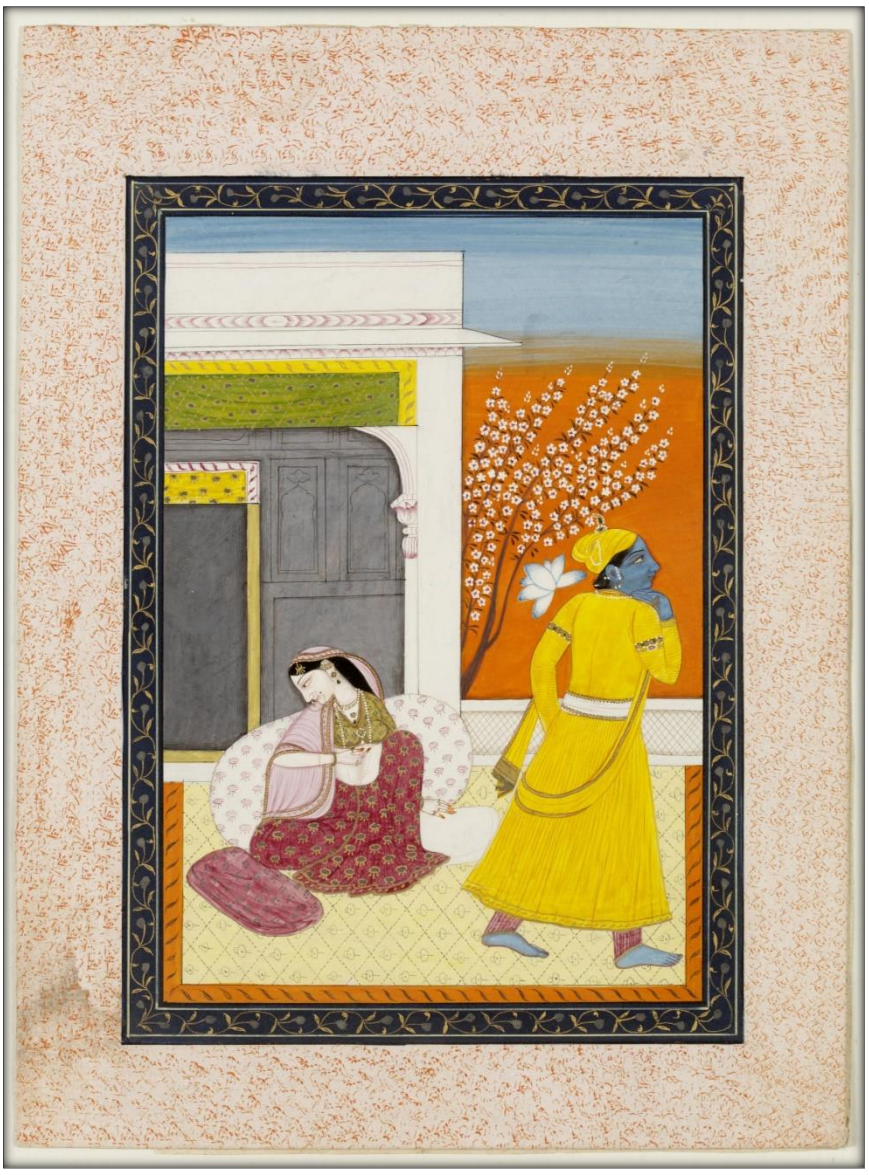

Fig 6.25: Possibly Radha as Abhisandita nayika (the estranged mistress), made c. 1870 at Kangra in the Guler style; unknown artist. Part of the P. C. Manuk and G. M. Coles bequest.[151]

[151] Image: © Victoria & Albert Museum, Museum number IS.40-1949.

These developments took physical form in 1954, in his dramatic intervention in the display of Indian art at the Victoria & Albert Museum. The history of the collections — their ownership, location, and space available for display — is a convoluted one, dating back to the trophies of the East India Company. Soon after the end of the Second World War and Indian independence, the Indian Section, which was a separate unit at the South Kensington Museum (the Museum's original name), merged into the main building. This resulted in a complete overhaul of the display, effected between 1954 and 1957, towards the latter part of Archer's first contract as Keeper.[152] Compared with photographs of older iterations of the gallery, Archer's vision reveals a startling change at three levels: the physical contents, aesthetics, and emphasis.

Following a controversial 'spring clean' (discussed previously), the spacious, white-walled displays now showcased miniature paintings, and 'most unusually…ended with contemporary and modern works.'[153] It was completely unlike the jumbled shop-windows look of times past, exemplifying the changed status and emphasis of the Indian Section to fine art; a collection worthy of respect and serious study.[154]

That the gallery and collections remained qualified by the word 'Indian', prompted protest from the Pakistan High Commission in London. Arguing that the objects were representative of all the countries in the subcontinent, they pushed for 'South Asia' as a more appropriate title. In an echo of the arguments made in 1947 over 'An Exhibition of Indian Art', the Museum roped in the authority of the Royal Geographical Society's Permanent Committee on Geographical Names for British Official Use, to lend weight to the view that 'South Asia' was unrecognizable to most Britons, [155] and that 'the adjective "Indian" [had] a wider cultural application than…India'.[156] While Archer supported this view, his comments to the Director are

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[152] He became Keeper Emeritus from 1959 at which time he was succeeded as Keeper by John Irwin.
[153] Kavita Singh, 'Museums', pp. 349-350.
[154] Also discussed in Chapter V of this thesis.
[155] Edward C. G. Boyie to C. J. M. Alport, Parliamentary Undersecretary, Commonwealth Relations Office, 14 May 1957. 45/1420, V&A Archives.
[156] Undated, unnumbered note from W. G. Archer to the Director, 45/1420, V&A Archives. I am grateful to Divia Patel, Curator of South Asia at the Victoria & Albert Museum for her insights, and for directing me to the relevant source.

confusing, conflating 'India' with 'Hindu' and thus claiming for it all the non-Islamic heritage of South Asia, even as he cited the Indian constitution as evidence of the country's secular identity:[157]

> 'If we link "Pakistan" with "India" in the field of art, we are suggesting that Indian art is a reflection of Islam. It is true that in the undivided India, Hindus and Muslims worked side by side in producing works of Indian art, but such art is Indian, not Islamic…It is part of the Indian genius to absorb and re-create foreign influences…The Mughal paintings…[etc] are Indian [because]…they are not expressive of Islamic religion but rather of the general culture of India. They were all executed in what is now India…The great majority are the work of Hindu artists and craftsmen rather than of Muslims. The two greatest Mughal emperors — Akbar and Jahangir — were vehemently Indian rather than narrowly Muhammadan…If it is felt that…some alteration in our title should be made, it is vital, in the Museum's interests, that India's opinion should be sought…we have nothing to gain and much to lose by wounding Indian sentiment or seemingly denying the national character of Indian art.'[158]

It is obvious that Archer's political loyalties lay with India, so at one level, this was mere mental gymnastics to convince his Director to keep an established name for the new gallery. There are several, overlapping criteria for defining art: the patron, the artist, or the provenance (which itself has layered implications). The final label depends on what one chooses to foreground. In the quote above, while emphasising India's multicultural, secular credentials, he equated Pakistan with Islam, conflating authorship with an artwork's 'religious' identity ('The great majority are the work of Hindu artists and craftsmen rather than of Muslims'). He then used *that* as the rationale to retain the name 'India' for the gallery thus reiterating a Hindu identity for Indian art, denying Pakistan similar claims to a varied — and ancient — culture.

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157 *Ibid.*
158 *Ibid.*

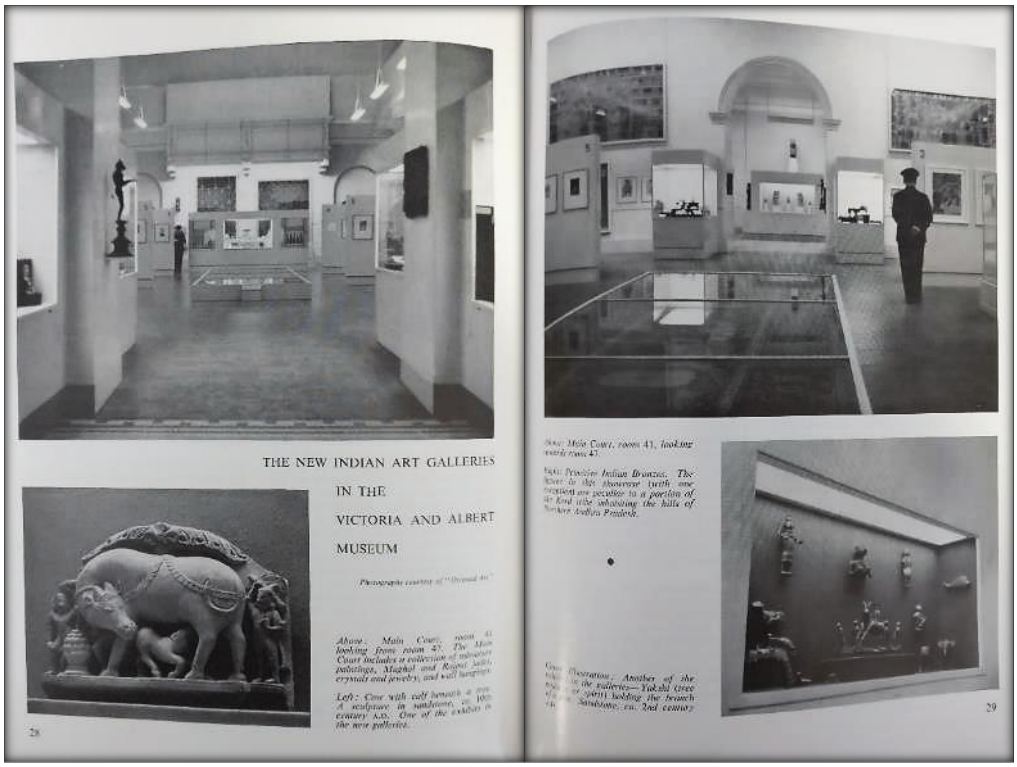

Fig 6.26: Views of the new Indian galleries at the Victoria & Albert Museum, as published in Indian Art and Letters.[159]

[159] Images: *Indian Art and Letters*, 31:1 (1957), pp. 28-29. Courtesy Cambridge University Library.

He went on to suggest that Pakistan's date of creation (post-1947), geographical provenance and Islamic credentials were what ought to define its art. According to this, sculpture from Gandhara could 'hardly be called "Pakistani Art"',[160] and Pakistan's notable artistic contributions were restricted to architecture. Here, Archer was articulating the same problem that Pakistani museologists were grappling with: how to accommodate Pakistan's non-Islamic past, whilst needing it to establish ancient civilizational identity. His solution was to claim it all for India. Revealing Archer's thinking on the subject foregrounds the impact of curatorial vision, here, relevant to the way a British audience might imagine India, versus Pakistan.

This example highlights the vital importance of incorporating 'soft' topics like art, aesthetics, and museums into historical enquiry. For, as this thesis demonstrates, collections remained key tools for shaping and reflecting public opinion in the postcolonial world — in *both* former colonies *and* imperial metropoles.[161] Furthermore, ideas of South Asia shaped for British museum-goers by the name and contents of a gallery, developed over time, could have 'real' implications. They might determine which issues spark protests and animate elections, or how people treat their neighbours.[162]

The career of art from the Indian subcontinent was somewhat different in the United States,[163] where the first major institutional acquisition of Indian art was made by the Museum of Fine Arts Boston. Denman Waldo Ross, a Trustee, bought a selection of Ananda Coomaraswamy's Mughal and Rajput paintings and drawings for the Museum in 1917 (hence called the Ross-Coomaraswamy collection).[164] The other significant American collection at the Philadelphia Museum of Art was weighted towards sculpture

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160 W. G. Archer to the Director, 45/1420.

161 The multi-layered impact of colonisation (including partition) on former colonisers has produced a variety of studies. For examples dealing with South Asia, see Joya Chatterji and David Washbrook (eds.) *Routledge Handbook of the South Asian Diaspora* (New York: Routledge, 2013); Kavita Puri, *Partition Voices: Untold British Stories* (London: Bloomsbury, 2019); or Susheila Nasta (ed.), *India in Britain*. Discussing the full implications, including how museums in former metropoles cater to ex-colonial diaspora audiences, is beyond the scope of this thesis.

162 For a project addressing migration and racism, two (of the many) outcomes of colonisation that have affected Britain, see www.ourmigrationstory.org.uk. This award-winning collaboration is a teaching and learning resource about migration to the UK (due to colonisation and other factors), based on the work of over sixty UK-based historians (accessed 7 July 2020).

163 Dr Darielle Mason, personal communication, April 2019.

164 Pratapaditya Pal, 'A Tale of a Collector and Curator'.

through the collections of the 'high priestess of Indian art', Stella Kramrisch. She moved with her collection to Philadelphia in 1949, and bequeathed it to the Museum in 1993.[165] In both cases, the acquisitions were conjoined with museum posts for South Asian art, that have now become curatorships named after Coomaraswamy and Kramrisch, respectively.

American museums' engagement with South Asian art was piecemeal in the twentieth century — likely owing to a lack of a colonial connection, and the compulsions of Cold War area studies that favoured East Asia.[166] South Asia was often subsumed under the idea of 'Asia is One' put forward by the art historian Okakura Kakuzo (1862-1913), curator of the Department of Chinese and Japanese Art at the Museum of Fine Arts Boston (under which South Asia was then placed). Although a Japanese scholar, he had spent time in India — where he formulated his ideas about the connectedness of the three mighty rivers of Asian art, i.e. China, Japan, and India — and was tasked with expanding the Museum's Asian collections. Even so, Indian art was peripheral to his scheme when he wrote an assessment of its Asian collections for the Museum in 1908, dwarfed by China and Japan, and tangential to the vaguely-defined 'Islamic arts' into which Mughal art from India slipped,[167] and often remains to this day.[168]

The major acquisitions of historic (or classical) Indian art by American museums (from private collectors) took place in the 1960s and 1970s.[169] By this point there was a sense of a corpus of knowledge on the subject, resulting from the constant discourse about it in the form of books, articles, reviews, and exhibitions. Randhawa collaborated

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165 Terence McInerny, 'On Collecting Indian Miniature Paintings', pp. 3, 9.

166 However, while not fully engaged all the time, the United States did not ignore South Asia and actively intervened in the region, often to inadequate effect. Paul McGarr, *The Cold War in South Asia: Britain, the United States and the Indian Subcontinent, 1945-1965* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013). For more on American collecting linked with geopolitical interests, see Brinda Kumar, 'Of Networks and Narratives: Collecting Indian Art in America, 1907-1972', unpublished PhD thesis, Cornell University (2015).

167 Brinda Kumar, 'Okakura's Diagram for Asiatic Art', *Mapping Asia,* (2014), pp. 64-75. Also see Brinda Kumar, 'Of Networks and Narratives'.

168 Dr Navina Najat Haider, personal communication, April 2019, and personal observation at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

169 Brinda Kumar argues for a long history of American engagement with Indian art, but her aim is to challenge the notion that Indian art history developed exclusively between Britain and India. It does not change the fact that the bulk of institutional acquisitions or donations took place in the 1960s and 1970s. Brinda Kumar, 'Of Networks and Narratives'.

with U. S. Ambassador to India, J. K. Galbraith to publish *Indian Painting: the Scene, Themes and Legends* in 1968,[170] which concluded its survey with 'Kangra painting'. The collector Edwin Binney III (among others)[171] hired Archer to advise him on how to build 'a fabulously impressive collection — possibly the best private collection of Indian miniatures in America'[172] (later acquired by the San Diego Museum of Art). Archer wrote the catalogue for Binney's Rajput miniatures in 1968 to accompany an exhibition shown throughout the country,[173] and the 'Archer Collection of Pahari Miniatures' was exhibited in the United States and published as *Visions of Courtly India* in 1976.[174] All this contributed not just to public comprehension, but the notion that Indian art was *comprehensible*.

'In the years since 1975', Terence McInerny suggests, Indian art as a whole has been the ultimate gainer rather than any one tradition within it; that the real winners are individual artists, who now 'tower above the rest…as new generations of scholars labor to isolate the style and career of the great Indian masters of form.'[175] He is right, but up to a point, for he himself notes the longevity of the Pahari 'craze' that Archer catalysed. McInerny does not mention that he achieved this in collaboration with Randhawa, but Archer was honest about his debts, and this thesis has unpacked the workings of their partnership. There are few historically grounded comparative studies of what drove

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170 M. S. Randhawa and J. K. Galbraith, *Indian Painting: the Scenes, Themes, and Legends* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1968). It was published in London in 1969 by Hamish Hamilton, and a revised Indian edition was published in 1982 by Vakils, Feffer & Simons Ltd.

171 Archer also advised Stuart Cary Welch, and 'other' American collectors. Brinda Kumar, 'Of Networks and Narratives', p. 233.

172 W. G. Archer to F. S. Aijazuddin, 20 September 1967, Archer Papers, Mss Eur F236/232. Archer summarised their relationship in notes he made about key figures he had met in his life, recording that he first worked for Binney on commission, and then as a consultant. But it was not a commercial relationship alone as he also valued their friendship. Archer Papers, Mss Eur F236/231.

173 Catalogue of an exhibition shown at the Portland Art Museum, September 24-October 20, 1968, and at various other museums throughout the country. *Rajput Miniatures from the Collection of Edwin Binney, 3rd* (Portland: Portland Museum of Art, 1968). Brinda Kumar notes the many private collections that were loaned for public exhibitions (including several loans by Binney), contributing to the visibility of Indian art in America. Brinda Kumar, 'Of Networks and Narratives'.

174 W. G. Archer, *Visions of Courtly India* (Washington, D. C.: International Exhibitions Foundation, 1976).

175 Terence McInerny, 'On Collecting Indian Miniature Paintings', p. 9.

global collecting of South Asian or Indian art in the twentieth century, its interpretation, and reception in different settings.[176] It remains outside the scope of this thesis to attempt such an undertaking. Nonetheless, one point that stands out is the key role played by individuals enmeshed in networks that cut across Europe, America, and India.[177]

Basing their study on artist genealogies and empirical details of patronage also proved strategic, while conferring practical advantages on Archer and Randhawa who could then date works, and trace provenance and 'authorship'. Yet, because those facts are what give an artwork its value in a European museum, or modern art historical context, it enabled Pahari painting to share those parameters, and be spoken of in art historical discourse in the same terms as European art. The eighteenth and nineteenth century provenance of Pahari painting meant such information was more easily unearthed (compared to say, sixteenth century Deccani painting), bestowing a distinct advantage over others that were more difficult to date and place. Linking to the previous point, this too contributed to Pahari painting being a comprehensible, appreciable, international phenomenon.

Such an approach contradicts another aspect of their output, which drew out the connection between Pahari painting, and its source of inspiration in devotional poetry.[178] Randhawa and Archer emphasised the real *feeling* Pahari paintings communicated, modulating the charge of lack of visual realism by eulogising the 'real' landscapes that they were set in. So, while the composition might be imagined, the elements of the

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[176] Regional reviews of collecting practices are a growing area of interest. For some insight into the interwar years in Europe, see Devika Singh, 'Indian Nationalist Art History and the Writing and Exhibiting of Mughal Art, 1910-48', *Art History,* 36:5 (2013), pp. 1042-1069. Also, Terence McInerny, 'On Collecting Indian Miniature Paintings'. Susan Bean notes the different trajectories that 'classical' and 'modern' Indian art had in the United States in the same period. Susan S. Bean, 'Post-Independence Indian Art and the American Art World, 1953-1970' in *Indian Painting* ed. by Mahesh Sharma and Padma Kaimal, p. 389. A more recent and thorough investigation of American collections of Indian art as fine art is Brinda Kumar, 'Of Networks and Narratives'.

[177] This is a point that Kumar also makes, but she does so to challenge the notion that Indian art history was shaped only by Britain and India, arguing that American collectors, dealers, and curators had a role too, that ricocheted in Britain and India. Brinda Kumar, 'Of Networks and Narratives'.

[178] This caters to the 'nationalist-metaphysical' interpretation of art, a method to understanding art that retains a place in this story regardless of shifts in aesthetic trends and art criticism, or *Marg*'s exhortations.

landscape depicted the hills, trees, flora, and fauna of the Western Himalayas. This was despite the notion that realism, narrative content or associational values did not matter if one was appreciating 'art for art's sake' (thus taking the formalist approach to the extreme).

Molly Aitken has pointed out that Rajput painting drew its landscape elements from a clutch of standardised templates whose meaning depended on the poetic context. So, the same dark monsoon clouds could represent oppression and fear if the *nayika* (the female subject of a painting) was apart from her beloved; as well as the joy of the season when lovers were together.[179] So they were not really 'real'. But it is also evident that artists drew inspiration from a variety of sources, whether their surroundings, or other kinds of visual stimuli they encountered.[180] What is more striking than this fine art historical distinction however, is that figurative appreciation stood *alongside* the push for a universal understanding of art based on an appreciation of its formal qualities. That is why it worked; why Pahari painting has such wide appeal.

Archer was far from being insensitive to poetry (he wrote it, and had considered a career as a poet), and he and Randhawa each shared some of the vision of the other — their mutual strong association of Pahari painting with Punjab was an important one. Yet the figurative and associational approach seems to be much more Randhawa's. One might also add the factor of target audience to weigh in the balance. Given his position of Keeper (and then Keeper Emeritus) of Indian Art at the Victoria & Albert Museum in a city that was fast becoming an international art capital (it was earlier Paris[181]), Archer's primary audience was international and Euro-American. That is what made his particular aesthetic vision and interpretation of Pahari painting so apposite. On the other hand,

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[179] Molly Emma Aitken, 'Dark, Overwhelming, Yet Joyful: The Monsoon in Rajput Painting' in *Monsoon Feelings* ed. by Margrit Pernau and Katherine Butler Schofield (New Delhi: Niyogi Books, 2018), pp. 137-184.

[180] It is evident that work made by artists in Jaipur, for example, responded to other works that they saw in the royal collection, including books. See sections on the 'Mughal' paintings from the Sawai Jai Singh II period, and the painting series from the reign of Sawai Ram Singh II in *Painting and Photography at the Jaipur Court* ed. by Giles Tillotson and Mrinalini Venkateswaran (New Delhi: Niyogi Books, 2016). Giles Tillotson also discussed this in 'Inspired: Artists and Patrons at the Jaipur Court', 50th William Cohn Memorial Lecture, delivered at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, 10 May 2019.

[181] Terence McInerny, 'On Collecting Indian Miniature Paintings', pp. 5-9.

even though Randhawa contributed the occasional piece (which Archer heavily edited) for international publication, he loomed much larger on the national stage.

For instance, in September 1954, Randhawa wrote to Archer announcing that he had 'found representation on National Academy of Art (Lalit Kala Akademi)…The General Council…has further elected me as a member of the Finance and Publication Sub Committees.'[182] At once, he suggested a series of four monographs on 'Kangra paintings' as the first project, modelled on Archer's own recent book on the same subject. He wished to utilise 'the best paintings which exist in all Art Galleries and Museums in India as well as abroad', for which he requested Archer's guidance.[183] The appointment delighted Archer, but he directed his collaborator to 'the wealth of material in such collections as N. C. Mehta's, Bharat Kala Bhawan, Banaras and in the Chandigarh Art Gallery's share of the Lahore Museum', believing that Randhawa would do much better to 'rely on local collections'.[184] Randhawa continued to follow this advice and sought out both private and public Indian collections to publish, although he engaged with foreign-held material once institutions such as the Victoria & Albert Museum had made sizeable acquisitions in the field.

There were many tributes in the felicitation volume of *Roopa Lekha* published to coincide with Randhawa's sixtieth birthday in 1969, including one by Archer. Assessing Randhawa's role in Indian art history, he described it as 'his greatest'.[185] Randhawa's 'object was to publicise Kangra pictures', and one method was colour reproduction through books, priced 'modestly'. Archer went on to compare Randhawa with E. B. Havell, likening their 'missionizing zeal', with the crucial difference that Havell sought to 'convert the West', whereas Randhawa's 'public, though far from being confined to India,' was,

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[182] M. S. Randhawa to W. G. Archer, 13 September 1954, Archer Papers, Mss Eur F236/301.
[183] *Ibid.*
[184] W. G. Archer to M. S. Randhawa, 24 September 1954, *Ibid.*
[185] None other than Mulk Raj Anand reviewed it in the Times of India. Mulk Raj Anand, 'Tribute to an Art Critic', *The Times of India,* 21 September 1969 (ProQuest Historical Newspapers, accessed 22 May 2017).

> 'nonetheless…chiefly his own people…As the chief vindicator of Kangra painting since Coomaraswamy, he has shown himself an Indian Havell, the greatest populariser and propagandist of his age.'[186]

The words 'missionizing zeal' and 'propaganda' were heavily loaded terms to use in a post-War, Cold War context. Emerging from the pen of a sensitive, careful writer like Archer, their implication is unambiguous: Randhawa and his contemporaries *themselves knew* that they were on a crusade, to persuade India and the world of the value of Pahari art. It was not only the beauty of the paintings that spurred them on.

In addition to his many publications for the Akademi and the National Museum, Randhawa did much else to popularise Pahari painting as the quintessential art of Punjab, as well as the nation.[187] He leveraged his official position to decorate every guest-house, tourist facility, and government office with copies of Pahari miniatures,[188] making it available 'across publics' who could then participate 'in the invention of its meaning and significance.'[189] He wrote to Archer in 1954, sure that he would 'be pleased to know that we have collected folk songs from all over the Kangra Valley and we are publishing them in Punjabi and Hindi with suitable illustrations from Kangra paintings.'[190] So not only were these paintings visible all over Punjab; but their elite, courtly context was on occasion subverted and presented as illustrating the voice of the people.

He emphasised again and again, the idyllic remoteness of the hills where this art was born, and loved to evoke the sense of sanctuary they provided from the chaos of

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[186] W. G. Archer, 'A Tribute to M. S. Randhawa', *Roopa Lekha*, 38:1&2 (1969), pp. 62-63.
[187] Randhawa must have been familiar with the power of circulating art. See G. Arunima, 'Ravi Varma's Many Publics: Circulation and the Status of the "Artwork"', in *The Public Sphere From Outside the West* ed. by Divya Dwivedi and V. Sanil (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), pp. 164-175.
[188] Diary entry, 18 January 1954, Archer Papers, Mss Eur F236/116. He might have overdone it. I am assured by colleagues who have been frequent visitors to government guest houses on research trips in more recent years (the reproductions are still there), that they have ended up 'hating' them.
[189] G. Arunima, 'Ravi Varma's Many Publics', p. 173. One (unfortunate) measure of his success is that the paintings attracted the attention of thieves. 102 were stolen in July 1970, of which a package of 43 were returned in May 1972. The whereabouts of the others remain unknown. It was widely covered in the press at the time. For a sample, see 'Paintings Stolen from Chandigarh Museum', *The Times of India,* 25 July 1970 (ProQuest Historical Newspapers, accessed 23 May 2017).
[190] M. S. Randhawa to W. G. Archer, 27 October 1954, Archer Papers, Mss Eur F236/301.

disintegrating Mughal India, from where artists fled to forge their new art in the secluded and sylvan Western Himalayas. This, as Arik Moran has demonstrated, had developed into a standard trope by the early twentieth century as the courts in the region sought to leverage the colonial encounter.[191]

Randhawa likened the Kangra Valley to 'Vaikunth', the god Vishnu's abode, or heaven;[192] and the Himalayas gave 'so much peace to the mind, their purity washes away one's sins.'[193] Believed to be the abode of the Hindu deity Shiva and a beacon for holy men (less often, women), the Himalayas have long been a significant religious symbol. One consequence was that they were a central feature of emergent Hindu national imaginaries of India. When we recall that Hindu devotional texts or poems were the inspiration for many Pahari paintings, it is possible to see how these associations could subtly signal their purity as the last great home-grown (i.e. Hindu) artistic tradition; and in turn, how this appeal might have driven enthusiastic promotion by diverse actors.

Randhawa also asserted the genealogical connection between Pahari painting and later Sikh art, and then linked this with the modern inhabitants of Punjab by championing it as their cultural and creative inheritance. Through this logic, Punjab became the soul of India, and indeed, Randhawa claimed as such on Punjab's behalf, declaring Punjabi 'the common language of Mother India'.[194] We understand why the Curator of the Himachal Pradesh State Museum (who could appreciate, if with some bitterness, the position Randhawa and Archer's aesthetic discourse had achieved for Punjab) was eager to reclaim what he saw as his own state's patrimony, to reposition it in a coveted spot within the artistic life of the nation.

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[191] Arik Moran, *Kingship and Polity on the Himalayan Borderland* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2019). Also discussed in Chapter III of this thesis.
[192] M. S. Randhawa, *Aap Beeti*, p. 353.
[193] *Ibid.,* p. 126.
[194] *Ibid.,* p. 13.

CONCLUSION

This thesis builds on two pillars of scholarship — on partition studies and on museum historiography — to bridge a gap that has been hitherto only dimly perceived. It presents the museum as a new source, or site, from which to write the history of partition, of early postcolonial India, and of Indian Punjab in particular. It shows how intense disputes and negotiation over archaeological remains, paintings, and manuscripts, provided a crucible in which the nation *and the region* were imagined and forged. Indian and Pakistani bureaucrats and diplomats learnt to articulate, rehearse, and hone this vision, through cultural contest.

In this context, it was not just the individual within new bounded geographies (albeit inspired by unbounded, 'imagined' ones[1]) who was able to shape a nation, but transnational, *collaborative* networks of museum and allied professionals too. The links that connected people and animated partnerships, cutting across national boundaries, and colonial hierarchies in previous centuries,[2] are shown to have remained at work in the middle of the twentieth century. They adapted to shifts in power relations between actors in networks; and were inflected by regional, national, and global politics. Not only did such networks help to effect partition, they also evolved to provide the framework within which subsequent national identities were constructed, using a range of museum objects, and the aesthetic discourses generated around them. As a result, they *continue* to impact the histories that we are able tell, and the identities we can build, of the region and the nation — depending on what we have in our museums and archives, who put them there, and why. These insights are of pivotal importance for museums and curators, both *of* and *in* South Asia, who are yet to interrogate their collections' *postcolonial* histories in general, but those of partitioned regions in particular. And when doing so, it is vital to remember that such histories will be as contingent and uncertain as those I have uncovered in this thesis.

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1 Francesca Orsini, 'The Multilingual Local in World Literature', *Comparative Literature,* 67:4 (2015), p. 346.
2 Ruth Craggs and Claire Wintle (eds), *Cultures of Decolonisation* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), pp. 15-16.

A network of people, each with attendant biases and 'imagined geographies' succeeded in establishing a previously obscure school of painting as the pinnacle of Indian art, branding it as Punjab's contribution to the nation. In doing so, they also centred the idea of India on Punjab. Setting the prevailing stereotypes about the pluck and courage inherent within Punjabis, against the violence they had both unleashed and suffered at partition, the outcome was a 'rehabilitation' of sorts for Punjab and its people. They were 'civilised' by the postcolonial museum and fine art, an ironic adaptation of the 'civilizing' mandate of archaeology and the colonial museum.

The aesthetic discourse that the Randhawa-Archer network built up around these paintings also produced a Hindu or Hinduised vision of Indian art and aesthetics, since Pahari painting was presented not only as the pinnacle, but the last great 'indigenous' artistic production. While I do not claim that actors operated with an explicit communal agenda, the resulting picture exposes the long-running nature of India's contested national identities,[3] played out in a niche arena.

Pahari painting retains its status despite Indian painting having become a more crowded field; and even as the emphasis has shifted from its formal qualities to an appreciation of the poetry it evokes and illustrates, and the interpretive genius of its artists.[4] Regardless of disputes over content and authorship, most art historians continue to write of it as 'Sikh' (citing Pahari artists' work for the Sikh courts[5]); and often conflate it with 'Punjab';[6] reproducing Randhawa and Archer's discourse and paradigm without interrogation.

It is also worth noting that once the Antiquities Act of 1972 came into effect, art over a hundred years old (which included Pahari painting) was no longer exportable from India. This was a fact that, Brinda Kumar argues, shaped subsequent engagement with

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[3] Joya Chatterji, 'Nationalisms in India, 1857-1947' in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Nationalism* ed. by John Breuilly (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 242-264.
[4] This is the thrust of the work of B. N. Goswamy, the leading art historian of Indian (especially Pahari) painting today.
[5] Paul Michael Taylor, 'Exhibiting the Kapany Collection: Observations on the Transformation of Sikh Art and Material Culture in Museums' in *Sikh Art from the Kapany Collection*, ed. by Paul Michael Taylor and Sonia Dhami (Palo Alto: The Sikh Foundation, 2017), pp. 286-309.
[6] For example, see two chapters by B. N. Goswamy in Susan Stronge (ed), *The Arts of the Sikh Kingdoms* (London: V&A Publications, 1999).

Indian art, based on the now 'frozen' international market.[7] If nothing new left the country (legally), it is logical to assume a domino effect on the circulation of, and discourses about what *was* available to see. By that time, no other form of Indian art had acquired as devoted a network of champions, which, I speculate, has contributed to Pahari painting remaining at the forefront. It is also no surprise that its 'identity' and 'ownership' remain contested.[8]

But this thesis does not seek, in simplistic fashion, to dislodge Punjab from its art historical throne, only to replace it with Himachal Pradesh. I do not subscribe to the view that art should (or can) be siloed in that way; nor, as we have seen, is it productive (or ethical) to ignore a collection's history and provenance. Yet, competing regional claims (within India as well as outside its borders) could be reconfigured as a *shared* inheritance, offering art and the museum a more constructive role today, than mere partisan drum beating and nation-building. The research also points to other, more productive areas to explore, such as the role and place of art in the public sphere (in the understudied 1950s and 1960s especially), or the rich cross-fertilisation of ideas that shape regional and transnational conceptions of it.[9]

It is important to note that this discourse was produced and consumed in conjunction with the building of the Chandigarh Museum. Despite being an institution with colonial origins and some would argue, designed for control, museums have become institutions that confer postcolonial legitimacy too. To demonstrate the validity of an idea, imbue a painting with distinction, or bestow recognition on a community,

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[7] Brinda Kumar, 'Of Networks and Narratives: Collecting Indian Art in America, 1907-1972', unpublished PhD thesis, Cornell University (2015).

[8] For example, V. C. Ohri stressed the local influences (through wall-art) on Pahari painting. *On the Origins of Pahari Painting: Some Notes and a Discussion* (Shimla; New Delhi: Indian Institute of Advanced Study/ Indus Publishing Co., 1991). Vijay Sharma, personal communication, May 2018. Also see Amar Nath Khanna, 'Revival of a Museum in Decay' in *The Diverse World of Indian Painting: Essays in Honour of Dr Vishwa Chander Ohri,* ed. by Usha Bhatia, Amar Nath Khanna, Vijay Sharma (New Delhi: Aryan Books International, 2009), pp. xvi-xvii. The author is explicit that international demand, and publications were factors.

[9] I am borrowing from Francesca Orsini's project on 'Multilingual Locals and Significant Geographies: For a New Approach to World Literature', in which the literary journal plays an important part; I suggest art journals could be better analysed too. 'Literary Activism in Cold War India: The Short Story, the Magazine and the World', Gordon Johnson Lecture delivered at the Centre of South Asian Studies, University of Cambridge, 30 October 2019. I am grateful to Prof Orsini for discussing her work with me.

there remains no better strategy than to harness the cultural clout that museums possess. In these ways, the postcolonial museum both carries forward, and departs from, the role its predecessors played.

Indian and Pakistani museums have much in common. They share a colonial history and collections, and struggled to accommodate the material remains (that include historic sites) of 'unsuitable' pasts. Both were part of an international museum movement whose educational goals melded with the postcolonial imperative to teach denizens to become citizens, and reinterpret collections to produce new national histories. Museums were the stage upon which topical national political debates were played out in the aftermath of independence. Colonial archives and the museum are often seen as symbols of state authority, control, and surveillance; inherited and in turn perpetuated by the postcolonial state. Although unable to account fully for West Punjab, this thesis nevertheless contributes to the evidence that postcolonial governments invested heavily in museums and archives for other purposes too: as part of the wider effort to reclaim, and retain, historic identities. It belies the typical image of apathy and neglect that has come to be associated with such institutions in the popular and professional imagination.

In the course of this investigation, new and sometimes troubling questions have emerged. What is the culpability of the postcolonial state — as much as the colonial one before it — in engaging in questionable collecting practices? There is an opportunity for museums to play a proactive role in healing the political divisions that have riven the subcontinent for decades. But given the ground-breaking discovery that movable evacuee property provided the bedrock for East Punjab's museums and archives, is it *ethical* for museum professionals to ignore that opportunity (alternately, avoid shouldering the responsibility)? Is omitting the acquisition story of Punjab's museum collections mere political expediency to be condoned, or does (and should) it have legal implications, or consequences? Given that much of the academic literature on nation-state formation, citizen-making, governance, and legal systems[10] is premised on how the state dealt with

[10] A selection includes Joya Chatterji, 'South Asian Histories of Citizenship, 1946-1970', *The Historical Journal,* 55:4 (2012), pp. 1049-1071; Haimanti Roy, *Partitioned Lives: Migrants, Refugees, Citizens in India and Pakistan, 1947-65* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2013); Taylor Sherman, William Gould, Sarah Ansari (eds.), *From Subjects to Citizens: Society and the Everyday State*

evacuee property, what is the broader impact of these discoveries? To evolve a nuanced view, this study, although an important beginning, must be expanded to include West Punjab, and stretch to encompass divided Bengal.

The state and its subsidiaries did not hesitate to tap into all available material cultural resources to give its people material evidence of their past, to provide a sense of lineage, the badge of creative genius and thus a sense of unique identity. This had the simultaneous benefit of bestowing the pedigree of patronage and connoisseurship on the state.

This thesis shows the extent to which Punjab's museums and archives were indebted to the princely states for their collections, both those from within Punjab and at its peripheries. Yet, while revealing the extent of the state's appetite for princely heritage, and its singular national vision, it has also demonstrated that both did not go unchallenged. The princes of Punjab used this same category of cultural asset to advance their own agendas, using the 'soft power' of culture to assert or retain their sovereignty in new and creative ways. Contrary to the rhetoric of the times, collecting and displaying art was not limited to serving as a marker of civilization. It was enmeshed with, and shaped by, contemporary political interests too. This thesis therefore unlocks new ways of thinking about the 'integration of the princely states', the transition from the colonial to the postcolonial, and the formation of the national imaginary.

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in India and Pakistan, 1947-1970 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Rohit De, 'Evacuee Property and the Management of Economic Life in Postcolonial India' in *The Postcolonial Moment in South and Southeast Asia* ed. by Michael F. Laffan, Nikhil Menon, Gyan Prakash (London; New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018), pp. 87-106.

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Appendix I: Review of Publications

The table below illustrates two points: the glut of publications on Pahari painting (or in which they appeared, or were discussed) between 1950 and 1970, including journals (publication year in black; reprint indicated in blue); and the number that the Randhawa-Archer network wrote, or contributed to (for colour codes, see end of table). Other titles on Indian art were published at this time, so this analysis is only indicative and must be read in conjunction with Appendix II, and the rest of this thesis.

	Publication	pre-	1945-	1950-	1955-	1960-	1965-	1970-	1975-	1980-	1985-	1990-
1	*Art and Letters*											
2	*Roopa Lekha*											
3	*Marg*											
4	*Indian Painting in the Punjab Hills*											
5	*Kangra Valley Painting*											
6	*Guide to the National Museum of India*											
7	*The Krishna Legend in Pahari Painting*											
8	*Pahari Miniature Painting*											
9	*Basohli Painting*											
10	*The Loves of Krishna in Indian Painting and Poetry*											
11	*The Art of India*											
12	*Kangra Paintings of the Bhagavata Purana*											
13	*Kangra Paintings on Love*											

14	*A Brief Guide to the National Museum*											
15	*Kangra Paintings of the Gita Govinda*											
16	*Kangra Paintings of the Bihari Sat Sai*											
17	*Paintings of the Sikhs*											
18	*Chamba Painting*											
19	*Garhwal Painting*											
20	*Indian Painting: The Scene, Themes and Legends*											
21	*Centres of Pahari Painting*											
22	*Kangra Ragamala Paintings*											
23	*Indian Miniature Painting*											
24	*Maharaja Sansar Chand: The Patron of Kangra Painting*											
25	*Indian Painting from the Punjab Hills*											
26	*The Development of Style in Indian Painting*											
27	*Travels in the Western Himalayas in Search of Paintings*											
28	*Pahari Miniatures, A Concise History*											
29	*Punjab Painting*											
30	*Painters at the Sikh Court*											
31	*Visions of Courtly India*											
32	*Pahari Painting and Sikh Portraits*											
33	*Basohli Paintings of the Rasamanjari*											
34	*Indian Miniature Painting*											
35	*Guler Painting*											

36	*Pahari Ragamalas*											
37	*Paintings of the Babur Nama*											
38	*Punjab Painting*											
39	*60 Years of Writing on Art and Craft in India: Roopa Lekha 1928-1988*											
40	*Indian Paintings: Exploration, Research and Publications*											
41	*On the Origins of Pahari Painting*											
	Totals (not including journals or reprints)			**2**	**6**	**4**	**5**	**7**	**5**	**6**	**1**	**1**

Albeit a rough exercise, the table demonstrates the growth from the 1950s to the 1970s. Of the 37 titles listed (other than journals and reprints), 23 were written by Randhawa and Archer between them.

Colour codes:

Green - Multiple contributions in journals over many years, by W. G. Archer, M. S. Randhawa, and other members of the network.

Orange - M. S. Randhawa, alone or in collaboration.

Yellow - W. G. Archer.

Pink - Others in the network: Grace Morley, Karl Khandalavala, F. S. Aijazuddin, B. N. Goswamy, V. C. Ohri, Mukandi Lal.

Clear - Others, not 'formally' in the network to the best of my knowledge.

Appendix II: Art Index Retrospective Database

The Art Index Retrospective Database is an archive index of art literature from 1929-1984, covering fine, decorative, and commercial art (from EBSCO Information Servcies). The tables show the result of searches conducted using the keywords 'India+art', 'India+painting' and 'India+Pahari/Kangra' from 1945-1984. The database is not as exhaustive as it claims (I did not find all volumes of *Marg* for instance). It nevertheless indicates the visibility of Pahari painting compared with other categories, in art publishing. Also note that 'India+art' produced every title with those words, regardless of their relevance.